

JANUARY 1994

*T*WENTIETH
CENTURY
WITNESS

*Man of letters,
diplomat, scholar—
the only contemporary
writer who can be
compared to
George Orwell and
André Malraux—
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looks back over
his dramatic, often
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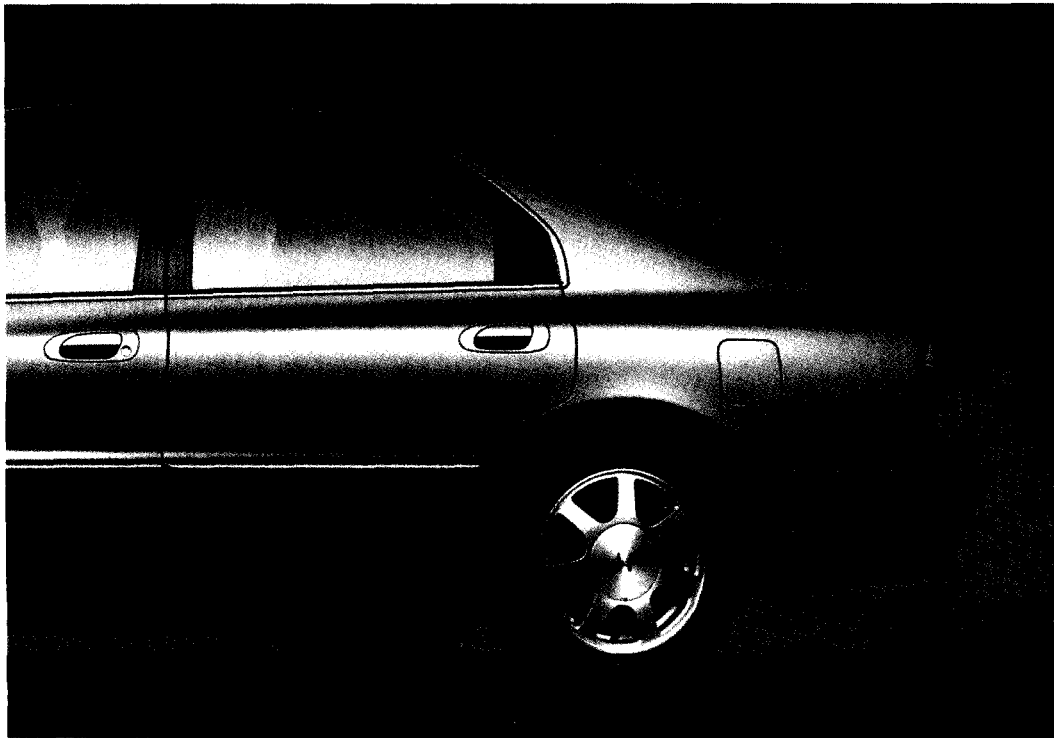
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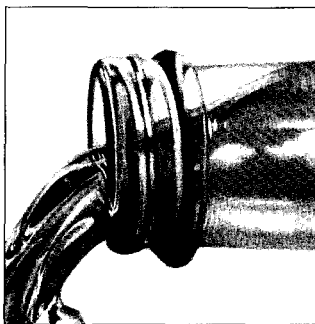
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*As Jim philosophized about
women, I continued to sip my
Baileys and coffee and read.
Between
the lines.*



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A YEAR ago last summer, soon after the publication in our pages of William Langewiesche's "The Border" (May and June, 1992), a reader offered this assessment: "I have just put down Part Two of William Langewiesche's magnificent article about the U.S.-Mexican border. Although the city where I live—Laredo, Texas—was scarcely mentioned, the conditions, corruptions, sadnesses, and dreadful premonitions that Langewiesche chronicles are painfully present to me each day. His words caught the spiritual ironies of the place, which has puzzled and appalled me for four years." Langewiesche's chronicle of life on the border, augmented by fresh travel and research, has now been expanded into a book, *Cutting for Sign*, which is being published this month by Pantheon.

The nature of the writing that appears in *The Atlantic Monthly* is, as regular readers know, quite diverse. Looking, for example, only at non-fiction, one finds personal essays and literary criticism, political analysis and discussions of public policy. Beyond that—in the largest nonfiction category of all—are the many kinds of writing that fall under the broad rubric "reporting." Some reporting ultimately has an argument to make, a clear point of view. But

another kind is more concerned with describing events in a dispassionate and precise way—achieving thereby an intimate portrayal of experience. William Langewiesche's work exemplifies the latter approach. Langewiesche himself once observed, "I'm a person who likes to base things on what is see-



able, on what I find on the ground. I need to go to the material and write from up close." The approach sounds simple, but simplicity in this case is a demanding mistress. Langewiesche's prose, too, seems simple, though it is simple in the way that Shaker furniture is: the spare contours are almost a hymn to craft.

Langewiesche has for two decades made a living as a professional pilot, and his knowledge of the U.S.-Mexican border was derived initially from his experiences flying above and along it for an air-taxi service. He has also flown over the vast region that is the subject of his next book: the Sahara. Like *Cutting for Sign*, this book, almost finished, grew out of an article that originally appeared in *The Atlantic*, in November of 1991. Langewiesche has already begun research for a third book, on Islam, and will be traveling this year throughout North Africa and the Middle East. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

James Fallows ("What Is an Economy For?") is the Washington editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* and the author of *National Defense* (1981) and *More Like Us* (1989). His article in this issue is the last of three to be drawn from his book *Looking at the Sun*, which will be published next month by Pantheon.

Jessica Hornik ("The Closed Forest") is a poet who lives in upstate New York. Her work has appeared in *The Nation*, *Wigwag*, and *The New Criterion*.

G. Bruce Knecht ("An Ottoman Odyssey") is a writer who specializes in international business and economics. He is currently a Reuter fellow at Oxford University, in England.

Marvin Mattelson (cover art) is a portrait painter and an illustrator who teaches at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. His work has appeared in advertisements, on movie posters, on book covers, and in magazines.

Erin McGraw ("Blue Skies") teaches creative writing at the University of Cincinnati. She was a Wallace Stegner fellow in fiction at Stanford University in 1988–1990. McGraw is the author of a book of short stories, *Bodies at Sea* (1989).

Conor Cruise O'Brien ("Twentieth-Century Witness") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and the author of many books, including *States of Ireland* (1972), *Herod* (1978), *Neighbors* (1980), and *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (1986), a portion of which first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

David Schiff ("Composers on the Couch") is a composer and a professor of music at Reed College, in Portland, Oregon. His major works include the opera *Gimpel the Fool* and the chamber composition *Scenes From Adolescence*. Schiff's article "Re-hearing Bernstein" was *The Atlantic's* cover story last June.

Eric Schlosser ("The Bomb Squad") is a novelist and playwright who lives in New York City.

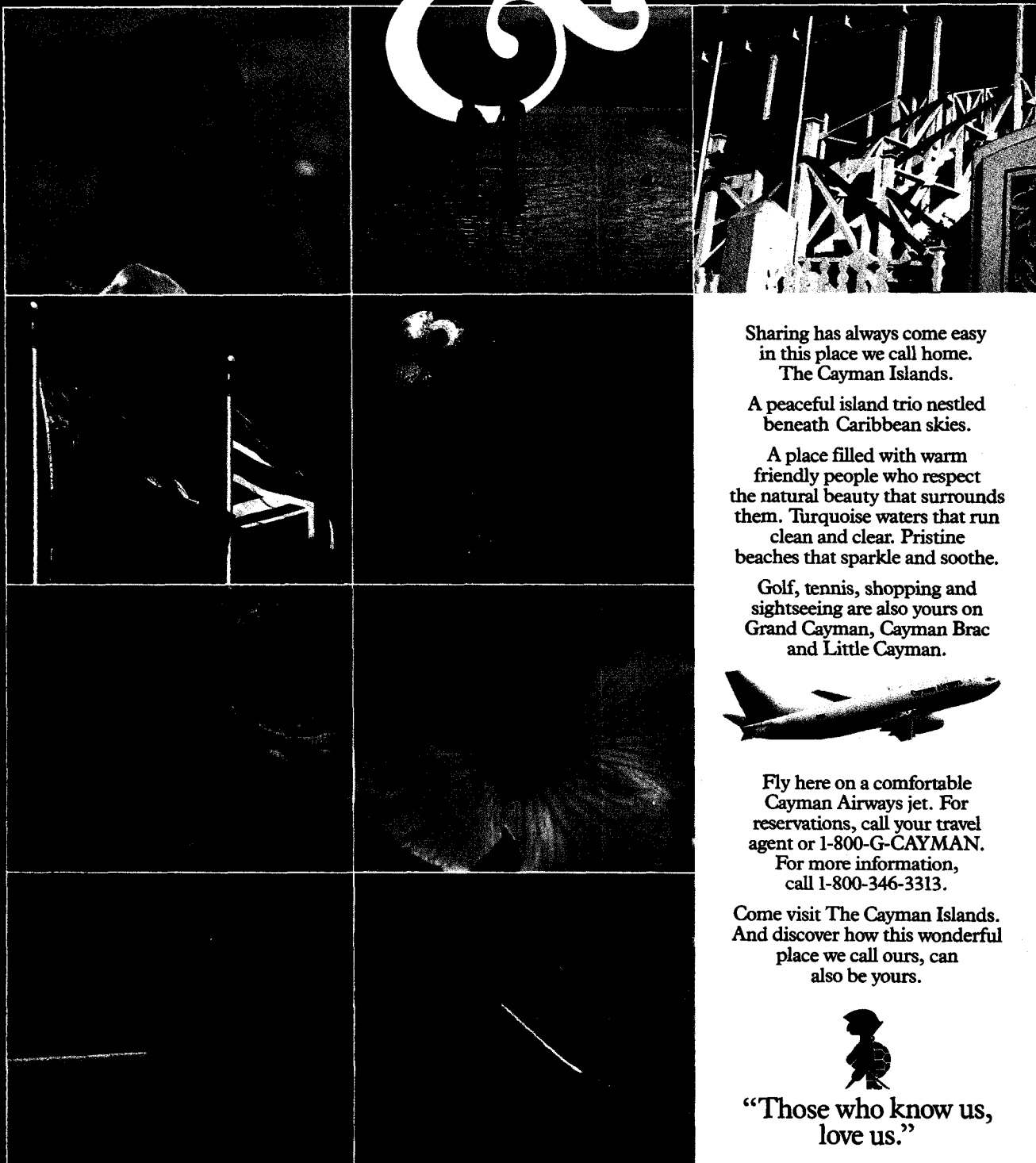
Edward Sorel and Nancy Caldwell Sorel (First Encounters) live in Manhattan. Edward Sorel is the illustrator of many books, including *Word People* (1970), written by his wife, Nancy Caldwell Sorel. Her second book, *Ever Since Eve*, was published in 1984, and she is at work on a book about women war correspondents in the Second World War. A collection of the Sorels' First Encounters will be published in the fall.

Steven Stark ("The Cultural Meaning of the Kennedys") writes frequently about politics and popular culture. Stark is a commentator for National Public Radio and a columnist for *The Boston Globe*. He is writing a book about the most influential programs in the history of television.

Andrew Todhunter ("Beneath the Ice") is an essayist and screenwriter. He is currently at work on a novel.

Lowell Weiss ("Timing Is Everything") is a staff editor of *The Atlantic*. His articles have appeared in *The New Republic* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

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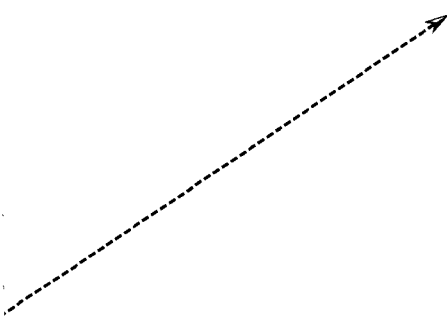
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Editorial/Business Office: 745 Boylston Street,
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Advertising/Circulation Office: 1290 Avenue of the
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LETTERS

Feminism in Crisis

I suspect that when the dust of a thousand women's studies programs has finally settled, we will be able to see clearly that feminism was a mere—and ultimately minor—phase in a much greater cultural transformation ("Feminism's Identity Crisis," by Wendy Kaminer, October *Atlantic*). We will then be able to understand why, after a generation of relentless propaganda, only a third of us (by Kaminer's own generous reckoning) call ourselves feminists.

It has always been too easy for the movement to attribute women's reluctance to identify with feminism to inadequacies or flaws in *us*—we are neurotically frightened of expressing our true rage against men, we are embittered aging housewives jealously denying to our younger sisters joys we ourselves could not possess, we are fearful that our heterosexuality will be compromised—or to such demonic male conspiracies as "the beauty myth." The simpler truth—that feminism as ideology requires us to accept as facts doctrines that many of us are sensible enough to reject—is never considered. But it is indeed the ideology that disenchant us. The naive credo of "male power" which ignores the relative powerlessness of most men; the insistence that violence is a "male" attribute in the face of the widespread abuse of children by women and of the phenomenal viciousness of adolescent girls in gangs; the conspiracy theories of male plots against women, when we can see that real life is so much more complex, chaotic, and accidental than feminism is willing to acknowledge—these alone would be sufficient to alienate many of us.

Add to them the feverish preoccupation with abortion that has characterized feminism, especially in the United States, an obsession disturbing to many pro-choice as well as pro-life women; the immoderate and fantastic diatribes on "rape

culture" and "date rape," which constitute a creepy kind of moral hypochondria; the distorted and disingenuous "statistics" of feminist research; the almost Teutonic myths of male wickedness and female virtue; and the fascistic tendencies of feminism which have become increasingly apparent in everything from the oppressive speech-and-culture codes of our trendier campuses to the "violence against women" legislation pending in Washington, and it should not be hard to comprehend why many women find feminism so eminently resistible.

Kaminer, like most feminists, cannot distinguish between the epic narrative of ideological feminism and the real cultural and economic trends that have for centuries led the West toward an ever greater equalization in the status of men and women. But the truth of the matter is that tremendous changes in the status of women began to take shape long before feminism flashed onto the screen, a process that continues in the era of feminism and will continue when feminism has come to be regarded as a tired, even vaguely counterproductive, aberration—just another ideological ripple in the great century of ideologies. The claims of feminism are (with apologies for the gender of the analogy) like the claim of the rooster that he has caused the sun to rise.

Deborah Hayford Weiss
Monmouth, Ill.

Wendy Kaminer writes that "in some feminist circles it is heresy to suggest that . . . being raped by your date may not be as traumatic or terrifying as being raped by a stranger who breaks into your bedroom in the middle of the night." Kaminer is apparently unfamiliar with the extensive clinical research demonstrating that neither the relationship of the victim to the rapist nor the amount of force used to accomplish the rape is determinative of the victim's psychological trauma. For both stranger and non-stranger rape, responses range from no

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long-term effects to permanent emotional and psychological scarring.

Many people are surprised to learn that the vast majority of rape victims are raped by someone they know, and that these victims have on average a harder time recovering than victims raped by strangers. Clinical experience—for example, a ten-year study by the Beth Israel Hospital (Boston) Rape Crisis Intervention Program of 1,000 consecutive victims—indicates both overlap and differences in the issues, concerns, and symptomatic presentations of the victims of stranger and nonstranger rape. Victims of nonstranger rape are more likely to keep their rape secret, because of guilt and shame over what they perceive as their poor judgment in trusting the rapist; are more likely to be blamed by themselves and others; and are less likely to believe themselves deserving of sympathy and professional help. Nonstranger rape has a unique effect on victims' ability to form relationships, with serious consequences for victims' ability to work and to socialize. According to Veronica Reed Ryback, the director of the Beth Israel program, "Another name we give acquaintance rape is 'confidence rape,' because there's such a betrayal of confidence. The perpetrator has used the relationship to gain access to the victim, and the victim's beliefs about who she is and who she can trust are shattered."

Lynn Hecht Schafran
*Legal Defense and Education Fund
New York, N.Y.*

As a committed feminist, I read Wendy Kaminer's article on feminism with great interest. Mostly I found it a thought-provoking and thorough analysis, with an evenness of tone that was a relief.

But although we will no doubt continue the argument about whether it is biology or socialization that makes one gender appear to be more nurturing than the other, about whether motherhood or work is more fulfilling to women, and about whether it is realistic to want to combine the two, is it really necessary to argue about whose responsibility it is to prevent date rape? Isn't it time that we empowered and respected men enough to put them unequivocally in charge of their own sexuality?

Julie Dearborn
San Francisco, Ca.

Although Wendy Kaminer's investigation into why so many women don't call themselves feminists was thoughtful, it needed a more radical perspective. A more productive question would have been, Why do any women call themselves feminists?

As an exercise in thinking about the unthinkable, let's consider why it is that so few men label themselves "masculinists." The tiny men's movement has been the butt of comedy ever since it emerged, because the concept of masculine solidarity strikes most men as ludicrous. Although men can more easily identify with other men than with women, they intuit that their fundamental interest lies not in bonding with other men but in outcompeting them for the attention of women.

Next, consider how much more unpopular the men's movement would be if an extraordinary proportion of its most assertive leaders were from the one set of men who prefer bonding with other men to competing with them for women: namely, homosexuals.

Steve Sailer
Chicago, Ill.

Wendy Kaminer says that there are degrees of suffering, which need to be kept in perspective. One of her examples of suffering that has been blown out of proportion is date rape. In making this assertion, Kaminer is buying into the popular myth that date rape is "rapette" compared with the suffering that "real rape," by a stranger, involves. From both federal statistics and independent research we know that substantial proportions of rapes are perpetrated by men known to the victim; and several published studies using standard psychological measures of distress have failed to demonstrate less impact among those women raped by acquaintances than among those raped by strangers. Furthermore, research has shown that women fear crime more than men do—although they are objectively less vulnerable to all forms of crime except rape—and, unlike men, restrict their lives to minimize their chances of being victimized. Although figures on the prevalence of rape vary according to the sociodemographic makeup of the sample and the measurement methods used, all published studies point to a level of rape that warrants social concern. Kaminer poses the rhetorical question "Why is

feminism helping to make women feel so vulnerable?" In light of social-science research on the subject, the reply to her query is, "Feminists don't make women feel vulnerable; rape does."

Mary P. Koss
*American Psychological Association
Task Force on Violence Against Women
Tucson, Ariz.*

In her analysis of why contemporary feminism is having trouble connecting with mainstream American women, Wendy Kaminer completely ignores a crucial issue: the attitude of the hard-core feminist leadership regarding legalized abortion. The insistence by many of the most vocal women's leaders on the extreme pro-choice position is offensive not only to pro-life, conservative women but also to many otherwise liberal persons of both sexes who are uncomfortable with a no-restrictions abortion policy.

Consider the history of the Equal Rights Amendment: it did not run into serious opposition in state legislatures until after the Supreme Court's abortion rulings in 1973. True, abortion and the ERA are separate issues, but the popular media and the anti-feminist movement were able to link these two issues in the minds of many people and their state representatives. I speak from personal experience: when discussing the virtues of the ERA with fellow Illinoisans during the campaign for ratification, I was often assaulted not only with "A vote for the ERA is a vote for drafting women/same-sex marriage/unisex public washrooms, and so forth" but also with "A vote for the ERA is a vote for abortion on demand."

Nina D. Gaspich
Chicago, Ill.

Wendy Kaminer and the women on the editorial staff of *The Atlantic Monthly* have joined the ranks of what Mary Daly (*Gyn/Ecology*, 1978) would call the "token torturers." Instead of celebrating the richness and diversity of the evolving feminist dialogue, they have chosen to label feminism's normal, healthy, and necessary debate on an important social, legal, political, and psychological issue—the role of women—as a "crisis." How will the questions Kaminer poses ever be addressed without such debate?

Barbara A. McGraw
Los Angeles, Calif.

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Wendy Kaminer replies:

I'm glad that Lynn Hecht Schafran has written to protest my demand that feminists entertain debate about date rape, because it was prompted, in part, by an encounter with Ms. Schafran. Nearly two years ago I attended a panel on date rape at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government which featured Ms. Schafran, three other attorneys, and a young female victim of date rape. The panel was part of a week-long series of student-sponsored events focusing on violence against women, and it offered little if any debate about the complexities of defining and prosecuting date rape. It seemed generally assumed that date rape was a pervasive, still neglected problem and that equating date rape with stranger rape was a legal and moral imperative.

So, for the sake of argument, I asked why the law shouldn't distinguish between degrees of rape, as it distinguishes between degrees of manslaughter and other assaults. The question was only argumentative, not hostile, but Ms. Schafran responded quickly with hostility and disdain; she didn't simply reject my suggestion; she scolded me for offering it. Well, I am a big girl who purposefully entered the fray and can take a public scolding. (I expected this one; it was quite predictable.) But while Ms. Schafran was dressing me down, I looked around at all the young women in the room and wondered how many would ever follow my example and themselves risk questioning a panel of feminist experts.

Both Ms. Schafran and Mary Koss have missed the point. I share many of their concerns about date rape, and given the historical failure to prosecute cases of date or acquaintance rape or even to prohibit marital rape, I don't believe that the law should distinguish between date rape and stranger rape. I've never been in favor of giving men license to rape the women they know. I'm also well aware of research regarding the psychological damage that nonstranger rape does (how could anyone be unaware of such conventional feminist wisdom?), and like many women I have at least a little firsthand experience with sexual coercion.

But, as my article made clear, I'm troubled by the expansive definitions of rape that equate sexual coercion with sexual confusion. I'm troubled by the use of rape as a metaphor for any unwanted look or

touch, by the protectionist tone of date-rape protests, and by the underlying message in discussions of rape about female weakness and male bestiality. And I am impatient with an increasing feminist intolerance of dissent. My article did not attack feminist insights regarding the equal harm done by date rape and stranger rape. It attacked the hardening of those insights into irrefutable feminist dogma.

Should feminism adopt any dogmas or ideological litmus tests? Nina Gaspich and Deborah Weiss raise the interesting question of feminist devotion to abortion rights. Should we regard the term "anti-abortion feminist" as an oxymoron? Not necessarily. Opposition to abortion rights is often but not always fueled by opposition to the emancipation of women. But though some people have moral or religious objections to abortion that have nothing to do with a desire to discriminate against women, it is a fact of life that abortion prohibitions do have a discriminatory effect. (That may be one reason why legalized abortion is not supported simply by the "hard-core feminist leadership," as Ms. Gaspich suggests; it's supported by a majority of Americans.) As a practical matter, equality is contingent on reproductive choice and access to reproductive services, which is why a range of abortion rights are as central to feminism as voting rights have been to the civil-rights movement.

But if feminism should not retreat from the battle for abortion rights and services, neither should it demonize the opposition. I have one feminist friend who opposes abortion on moral grounds, but she has learned the hard way to keep her opposition to herself—which I regret. If the questioning of feminist doctrine is not going to be tolerated, the feminist establishment won't have to fire me; I'll quit.

Point of Origin

Nicholas Lemann's review of *Streets of Laredo* ("True West," September *Atlantic*), which expands to cover Larry McMurtry's literary career, makes good use of *Laredo* to illustrate an interesting insight into that career. I would point out one error of fact, which does not weaken Lemann's thesis: McMurtry's "daring and hilarious debunking of the holy trinity of Texas literature" was published not

in *In a Narrow Grave* but in *The Texas Observer*.

Martin Shockley
Denton, Texas

Nicholas Lemann replies:

I was referring to an essay called "Southwestern Literature?," which is Chapter Three of *In a Narrow Grave*. My edition doesn't say where the essays were originally published. It may be that this one first appeared in the *Observer*, and Martin Shockley and I are both right.

Think Again

Gene Santoro ("Borrowed Beats," September *Atlantic*) says that Havana's pre-Castro "prostitutes and Mafiosi . . . [were] dependent on racism and exploitation." Does he think that contemporary Las Vegas, whose prostitutes and Mafiosi are European-American, is racist, or is he being mindlessly politically correct?

Myron Kayton
Santa Monica, Calif.

Gene Santoro replies:

I wrote about Havana, where the racial makeup of the local population and the huge influx of wealthy Americans had specific effects on inevitable tourist-trap sidelines like prostitution and gambling. Minus those ethnic and cross-cultural collisions, the Las Vegas versions of those industries are structured differently. Perhaps Myron Kayton just didn't think before he called me mindless.

Vox Populi

If someone had told me that *The Atlantic* was going to fill five pages with a critical analysis of rap ("Vox Populi," by Francis Davis, October *Atlantic*), I would have responded, "You've got to be kidding."

But *The Atlantic* has, and the result is an artsy, politically correct commentary that gives importance to this "subgenre of pop," which, at best, should be either brushed off with a few words of admonishment or ignored completely.

The article is adorned with high-sounding phrases—"punk minimalism," "delight in onomatopoeia," "machismo fantasy," "verbal ironist," to cite a few.

SONY

It's all so ludicrous, applying these terms to songs, squalidly crafted, that pollute the air with "bitch," "ho," and "base-head" amid lyrics celebrating gang violence, rape, and anti-Semitism.

Francis Davis admits that his "feelings about rap are . . . conflicted." Aw, shucks. But I suppose he feels that this lame disclaimer is necessary to enable him to walk both sides of the street.

Rap may continue to prosper. It may fade away. Whichever, elevating this mon-grel claptrap to the pages of *The Atlantic* says little for your editorial judgment.

Frank Jacobs
Burbank, Calif.

Francis Davis replies:

"Artsy" is a matter of taste, but "politically correct" hardly fits a piece in which, for example, critical enthusiasm for the group Public Enemy is taken as "evidence of the extent to which black racism is now accepted as a legitimate response to white oppression." Despite responding favorably to much of the rap I hear on a musical (or at least a *sonic*) level, I object to many of the same things about it that Frank Jacobs finds so offensive. I regret that this point was lost on him, though I probably shouldn't be surprised that someone whose view of popular culture is as solipsistic as Mr. Jacobs's apparently is (if he's appalled by a cultural phenomenon or just not interested in it, it's unworthy of serious discussion) would interpret my ambivalence toward rap as a critic's way of walking "both sides of the street."

Advice & Consent

"Washington: President Powell?" (October *Atlantic*), by Steven Stark, could have been an opportunity to present arguments for and against Powell as a political leader based on his positions on important issues, or perhaps based on his stated goals for the future of the United States. Instead Stark gave us page after page of fluff. Nowhere does Stark reveal anything about Powell's views; in fact, he states right at the beginning of the article that Powell's "views on issues from abortion to economic policy are unknown, apparently even to his numerous friends and admirers." If this is true, then

Stark should have realized that there was no article to write, and he should have found another subject.

Steven Salzberg
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Md.

In Michael Wright's article on convention and tourism boycotts ("Public Policy: Avoidance Tactics," October *Atlantic*) Wright quotes the national director of The Fund for Animals as saying "We are sensitive to the fact that the boycott [of Alaska] resulted in some collateral damage." That terminology is very telling and opens up another view of the subject. "Collateral damage" is a classic term used when describing the consequences of a war, often used by just-war theorists when attempting to analyze a conflict. Just-war theory is the best-developed body of thought on how to analyze the moral implications of wide-ranging, inherently complex high-level decision-making. It offers the best method of analyzing a policy as intrinsically blunt as a boycott.

Just-war theory states that a just war must be fought for a just cause, and be fought in a just manner. To satisfy the just-cause criteria the war must be conducted by a responsible government, as a last resort, with a clear chance of success, after a reasonable determination has been made that the evil caused by the war will be less than the good created. To satisfy the just-manner clause the war must be fought in a manner that goes out of its way to minimize civilian deaths ("collateral damage"), even to the extent of increasing military casualties.

Analyzed in these terms, would a boycott qualify as a just policy? Are any of the organizations that call for boycotts responsible? Are they engaging in a boycott as a last resort? Do they have any chance of success? Have they made every effort to minimize collateral damage?

I think the burden of proof is on those calling for boycotts. In my view, virtually every organization mentioned is a small, unrepresentative group of self-serving yuppies determined to make a "moral statement" by sacrificing the well-being of innocent women and children. They fail every "just-public-policy" criterion.

James J. Bante
Rochester Hills, Mich.

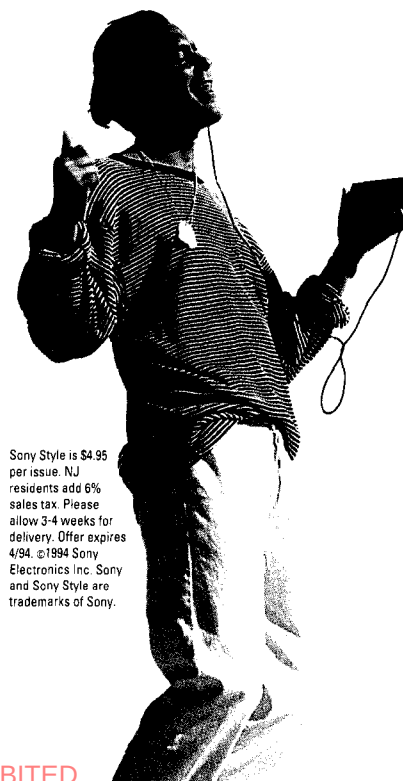


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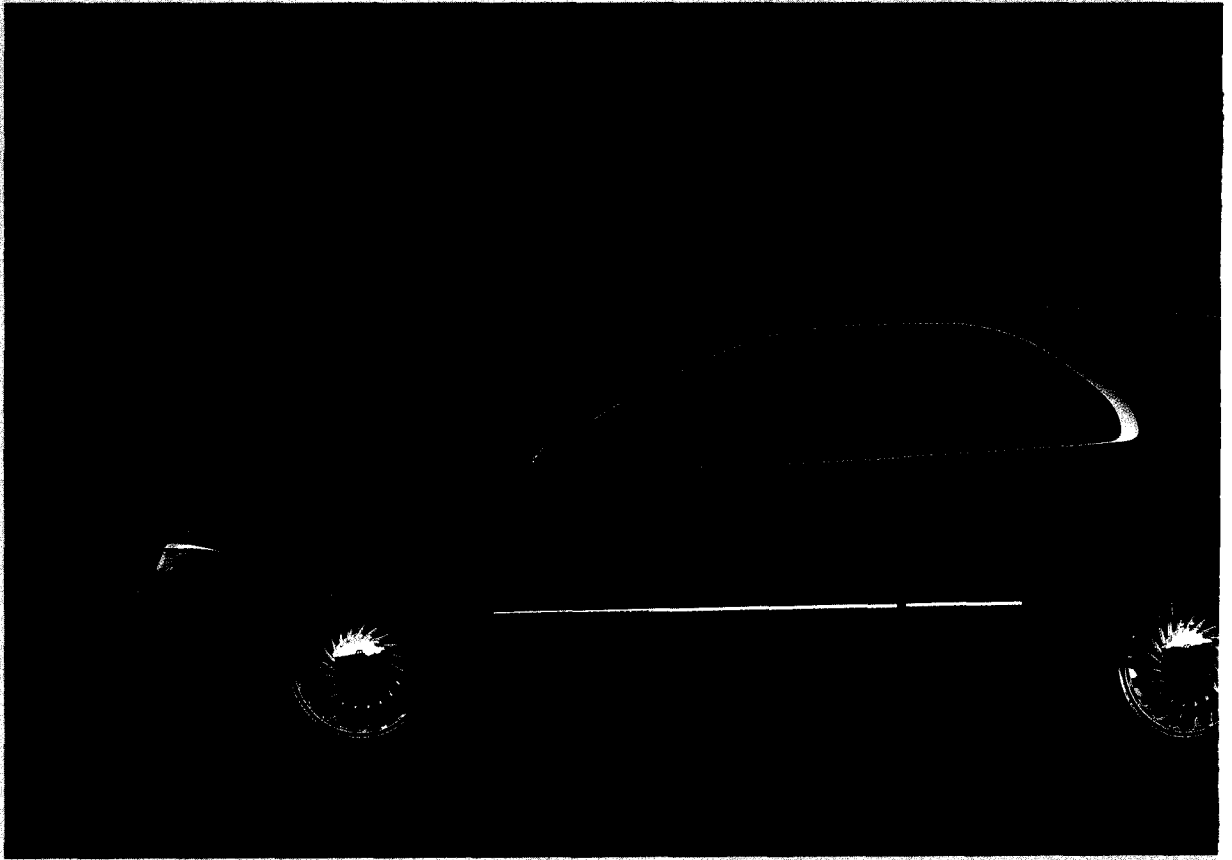
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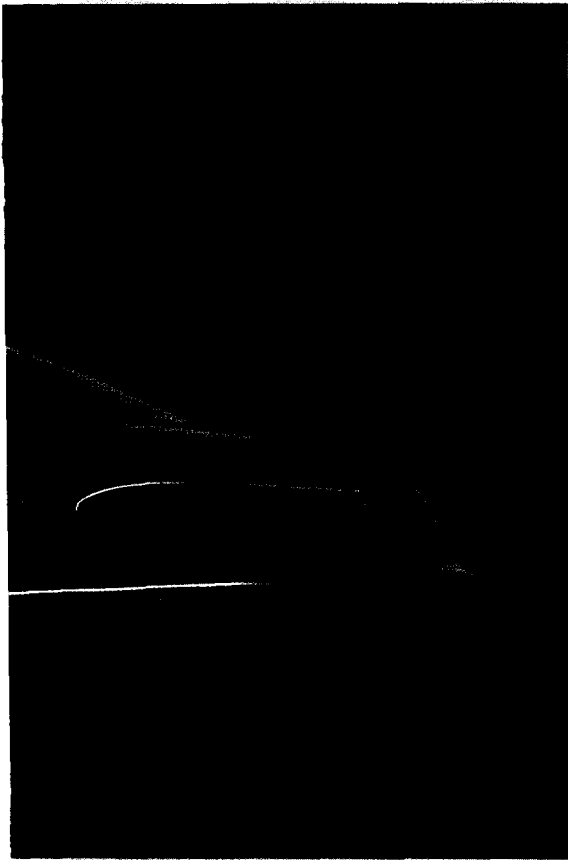
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THE JANUARY ALMANAC

Government

January 1, starting today colleges and universities are no longer exempt from 1986 amendments to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, prohibiting mandatory retirement ages for most workers. When the amendments were passed, academic institutions argued that the prohibition would only entrench an aging, increasingly ineffective professoriate—unremovable because of tenure—and prevent the hiring of younger professors and the infusion of new ideas. Congress granted academia an eight-year exemption while the matter was studied; the National Academy of Sciences committee charged with investigating it recommended last May that the exemption be allowed to expire today as scheduled. 5, the House and Senate reconvene today for the second session of the 103rd Congress.



Health & Safety

January 1, starting today jockeys must wear safety vests when riding in virtually all North American racing jurisdictions. The vests protect the neck, spine, collarbone, ribs, tailbone, and vital organs with fiberglass padding; their use is already mandated in England and in some parts of Canada. The vest's weight—two pounds or less—will not be counted when a rider weighs in. Some jockeys who are well below their scheduled weight assignments have already begun wearing vests, including racing's leading female jockey, Julie Krone. Last August, Krone fell during a race and was kicked in the chest by a horse; her doctors believe that her safety vest may have saved her life.



The Skies

January 2, Earth is at perihelion, the closest it comes to the Sun all year. 7, early this morning the waning crescent Moon lies just below Jupiter, which will be high in the southern sky at dawn all month long. The other planets are clustered near the Sun and so are hard to see. 15, the Summer Triangle is visible in the northwest at dusk, and it will be visible at due east at dawn on the 16th. Although the Triangle is a well-known entity in the heavens—on summer evenings it lies directly overhead—its three bright stars, Vega, Altair, and Deneb, are actually in different constellations. 27, Full Moon, also known this month as the Wolf, Broken Trees, and Frost in the Tepee Moon.

Demographics

If past trends hold, more businesspeople will receive job offers this month than any other: 15 percent more offers are tendered in January than in any other month. Year-end reorganizations, during which companies draw up budgets and evaluate personnel needs for the coming year, are largely responsible for the surge. A corresponding tendency by employees to take stock as the year wanes creates vacancies. The common corporate practice of awarding year-end bonuses is also a factor: employees considering a job change may stick out the year in anticipation of a bonus, while others may resign if they are passed over. Many job seekers fail to capitalize on these



trends, because they believe that potential employers will be too distracted by the holidays to hire for the new year. But employment experts point out that the holidays are in fact an ideal time to seek interviews: executives, loath to be away from their families, are less likely to be traveling on business, and they tend to stay close to the office not only to work on budgets but also to attend holiday parties and collect their own bonuses. And because many routine office operations slow down over the holidays, secretaries and other support staff may be less in evidence, leaving key decision-makers more accessible to job seekers.



Food

January 1, as of today the allowable deduction for business meals and entertainment is reduced from 80 to 50 percent—a change aimed at increasing federal tax revenue by as much as \$15 billion over the next five years. The National Restaurant Association argues that the nation's restaurants stand to lose \$3.8 billion a year and will be forced to cut 165,000 jobs. Others say this scenario would obtain only if businesses cut their spending on meals enough to recapture every dollar lost to the reduced write-off. At least three congressional bills have already been proposed to restore the 80 percent deduction.

Environment

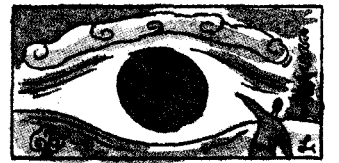
January 1, as of today all new toilets manufactured for the home must use no more than 1.6 gallons per flush—less than half the 3.5 gallons used by most existing models. According to *Consumer Reports*, Americans currently flush some 5 billion gallons of water a day, of which 3.5 billion



gallons are superfluous; the new standard will significantly reduce this excess and thus ease the burden on municipal water and sewer systems. *Consumer Reports* has given high marks to several low-flush toilets, but homeowners seem less sanguine: hardware stores report brisk sales of conventional models, which can be offered as long as supplies last (except in states that had already established a 1.6-gallon standard). Manufacturers have until 1997 to develop low-flush toilets for public use.

100 Years Ago

Edith M. Thomas, writing in the January, 1894, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "What pleasure the eye finds in discovering sharp antitheses, even of the most trivial nature! Looking across the snowy roof just now, I observed a pleasing effect produced by a sooty chimney against the pale blue sky as background. Encouraged by that delicate, faint-tinted foil, the chimney soot insists upon looking like some sort of rich brown-black efflorescence or rust, a velvety growth of mould, or a minute black fungus. The chimney becomes, at this moment, as piquing to my fancy as if it were some storied tower or column. I am aware that this is 'all in my eye,' as the common saying is. But, more than this, the eye is a great autocrat, and will not be denied; if it seeks luxury, grandeur, adventure, out of the simplest elements, it will itself construct all these."



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The Cultural Meaning of the Kennedys

Why JFK has more in common with Elvis than with FDR

WITH all the media coverage occasioned by the thirtieth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's death, Joe McGinniss's biography of Edward Kennedy, *The Last Brother*, rather got lost. The brief controversy over McGinniss's methods, in turn, obscured a larger milestone: along with the flood of docudramas about the first brother, *The Last Brother* was yet another step in the transformation of the Kennedys from largely conventional political figures into pop-culture deities from the world of entertainment—the cultural equivalents, perhaps, of Elvis Presley or the Jacksons. It should be no surprise that popular biography has reflected this conversion, or that the change parallels the way politics has come to be viewed in the years since the Kennedys hit the scene. Neither is it a coincidence that the Kennedy family, through its infatuation with Hollywood, was instrumental in the conversion. "All history is gossip," President Kennedy used to say, which may or may not have been accurate then, but—owing to the changes he and his family helped accelerate—is somewhat more accurate today. "So the rumors are true?" asks a character in *The Player*, a 1992 film about Hollywood. "Rumors are always true. You know that," another answers. John Kennedy, Joe McGinniss, and millions of Americans wouldn't have put it any other way.

by Steven Stark

Of course, traditional political biographies are still being published about the Kennedys: witness *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*, Richard Reeves's recent account of the JFK presidency. But just as the current political doings of the Kennedys are frequently dwarfed in the popular press by news of the latest party, drinking scandal, or date for John Junior, so in recent times have traditional books about the Kennedys been overshadowed by such gossipy volumes as the McGinniss work; Richard Burke's tell-all about Edward Kennedy, *The Senator*; Peter Collier and David Horowitz's *The Kennedys: An American Drama*; and even (though they're less gossipy) Nigel Hamilton's *JFK: Reckless Youth* and Thomas Reeves's *A Question of Character*. Because of the current cultural obsession with inner life, biography now

tends to stray into the personal more than it once did. Still, the Kennedy family isn't written about the way that Harry Truman, or Ronald Reagan, or Martin Luther King Jr. is. The Kennedys are different from you and me and them, and not simply because they have more money.

To be sure, the Kennedys have had—and continue to have—a political impact on the nation. To many, they have embodied an ideal of public service. But politics hasn't been this family's calling card in the mass culture for some time. Even in the ag-



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*Politics hasn't been
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gregate the Kennedys have never had the political impact of Martin Luther King Jr., FDR, or even Reagan. If President Kennedy is still revered today, it's more because of his glamorous style and because he died young than for any specific accomplishments. Robert Kennedy is identified with a liberal agenda that still inspires many, but he came late in life to that cause. What's more, at the time his only national candidacy was cut tragically short, it was hardly clear that he would win the election, or even that he could beat out Hubert Humphrey for the Democratic nomination. In the days before his death Kennedy lost to Eugene McCarthy in the 1968 Oregon presidential primary, and barely won the key California primary a week later. Edward Kennedy's 1980 attempt at national office failed; he lost most of the important primaries in his own party to an unpopular President. That, of course, doesn't tarnish his considerable record over the past three decades as one of the few effective spokesmen left for liberalism. But outside Massachusetts that status is hardly what makes him, or his relatives, the celebrities they have become.

The Kennedys have really become entertainment superstars. Consider some of the evidence: Like Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, they attract a kind of tabloid journalism and biography which focuses even more than usual on scandal and unsavory personal tidbits. The Palm Beach rape case, after all, was a Hollywood trial, not a Washington one, and the model for most of these recent Kennedy books is not Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s *A Thousand Days* but Albert Goldman's *Elvis*. The screaming crowds that engulfed Robert Kennedy in 1968—tearing at his clothes and stealing his cuff links—were not unlike those that followed the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. If several people were killed trying to see Robert

Kennedy's funeral train, the analogy may be as much to the reaction to Rudolph Valentino's death or to what happened in 1979 at a Who concert as it is to the funeral procession for Abraham Lincoln.

This is a family identified by first names in the familiar Hollywood style—Jack, Jackie, Bobby, Ethel, Teddy—just as we once knew Elvis, Marilyn, and Ringo, but certainly not as we have known Franklin, Ronald, or even Bill. The Kennedy men are well known for their rather public life of wine, women, and song (or its modern equivalent), an existence that approximates life on the road for a rock star. Even in marriage the family reveals a kind of split personality about what it has become. Some Kennedys have gone into politics and married other people in that profession, but the two best-known current family alliances are Maria Shriver's marriage to the box-office king Arnold Schwarzenegger and John Kennedy Jr.'s relationship with the actress Daryl Hannah. (Entertainment-in-law Peter Lawford was a preview of things to come.)

DEFINING the Kennedys as an entertainment family does explain some anomalies. There is only a weak tradition of political families in this country; the strong antipathy to royalism explains why. But there is an enduring convention of entertainment families who are often treated by the press and public like royalty, their names including Booth, Barrymore, Fairbanks, Bridges, Sheen, Douglas, Belushi, Baldwin, Garland and Minnelli—the list goes on. There has also been a pattern of “brother acts” in vaudeville, and particularly in rock and country music—the Everly Brothers, the Stanley Brothers, the Jacksons, the Osmonds, the Kinks, the Beach Boys, the Allman Brothers, the Mills Brothers, the Statler Brothers, the Ames Brothers, even New Kids on the Block.

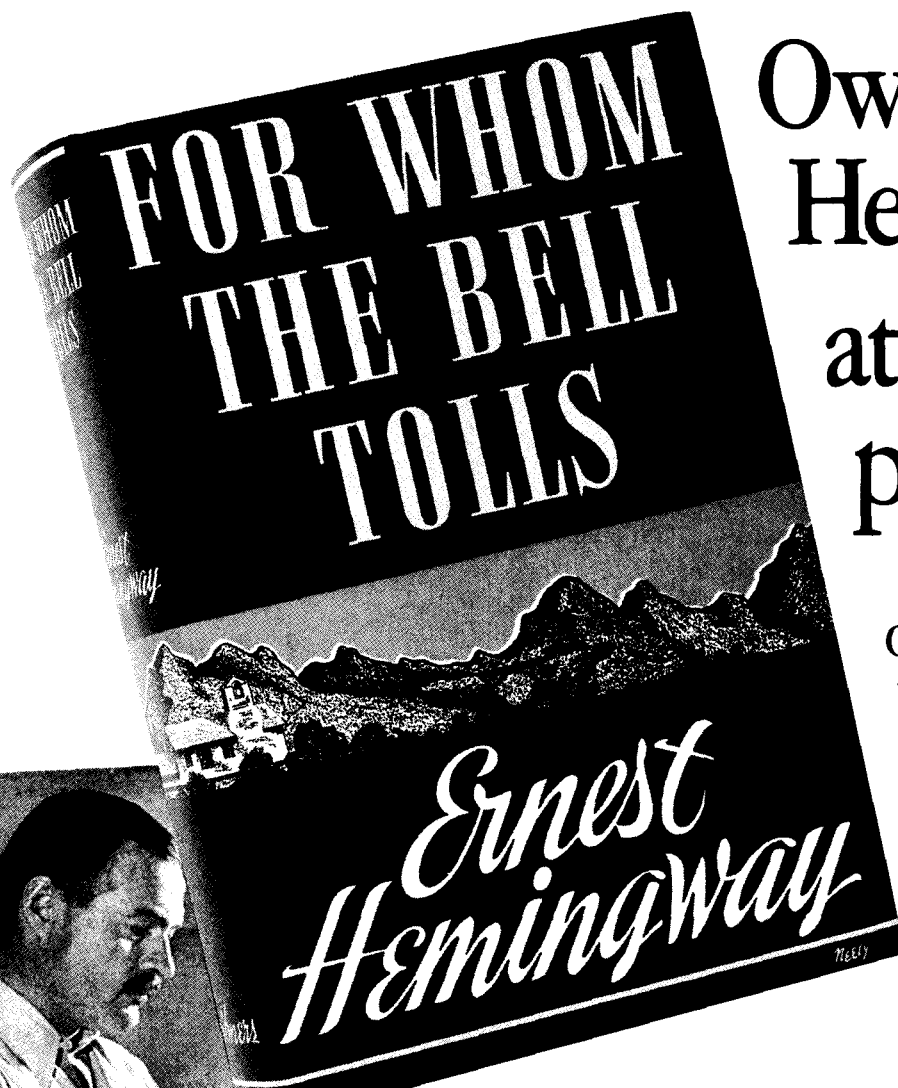
According to pop-culture folklore, several of these brother acts in rock have followed roughly the same pattern: The family is driven hard and molded by a difficult father. The first success is collective. Then one brother hits it big and becomes a superstar. Other family members ride the superstar's name and coattails to derivative careers of their own. Some brothers break down under the pressure, while other members of the

family seem to invite trouble on a regular basis. So it has often seemed to go with the Kennedys.

As a kind of entertainment family the Kennedys were a prime force in blurring the distinctions between Hollywood and Washington—that blur being a condition characteristic of the age. As the critic Richard Schickel has observed in his book *Intimate Strangers*, they were certainly not the first to court the film industry or to recognize the consequences of the media era. Woodrow Wilson had D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* screened at the White House in 1915, and Douglas Fairbanks told Franklin Roosevelt when he was only assistant secretary of the Navy that he had the persona to succeed as an actor if he so chose.

But the Kennedys helped complete the revolution. As the biographers tell it, Father Joe “mingled” with Gloria Swanson and other stars, and his real business interest was in movie production, because he thought that was where the aristocracy of the next generation would be created. Judging from the biographies, much of the next Kennedy generation's childhood appears to have been one long photo op, culminating in John Kennedy's marriage to, of all things, an aristocratic photographer. If, in the media planning devised largely by Father Joe, JFK's 1960 race for the presidency was the first to resemble the packaging of a Hollywood blockbuster—the buildup, the bio, the promos, the publicity shots, the early buzz among influential critics, the reviews, the breakthrough performance (in debates), and, finally, the crowd reaction—that may have been no accident. “John F. Kennedy treated southern Ohio yesterday as Don Giovanni used to treat Seville,” Murray Kempton wrote one day in a campaign dispatch striking both for its honesty and for the new political phenomenon it was

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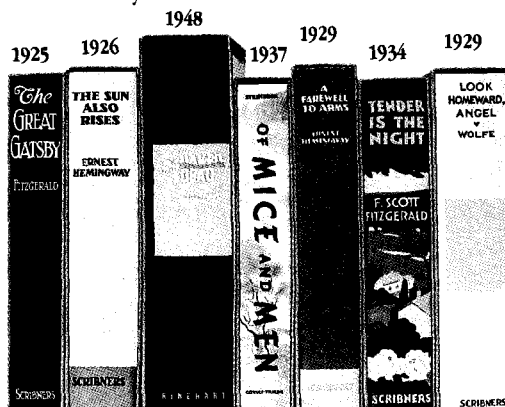
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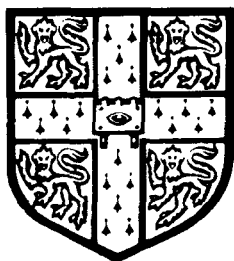
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describing. After all this, and an Administration that made the elevation of style over substance into both a zeitgeist and an ideology, not only the hanging out with Sinatra and Marilyn was inevitable; so was the eventual arrival of someone like Ronald Reagan.

Sadly, the assassinations also played a role in the conversion of the Kennedys into pop-culture phenomena. As Schickel has observed, dying young, if not violently, is something of an entertainment-industry phenomenon, as anyone familiar with the lives and deaths of Elvis, Marilyn, Valentino, James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Buddy Holly, John Belushi, Ritchie Valens, John Lennon, and Jim Morrison knows. It's not simply that an untimely death fulfills a romantic image that goes back to Byron and Keats, or that the premature passing of an entertainment figure tends to inspire a death cult in which numerous fans refuse to believe the star is dead. Dying young freezes the stars at their peak: like the promise of Hollywood itself, they remain forever young and beautiful—the perfect icons for the immortality that films and records purport to offer.

Death also to some extent frees journalists and biographers from having to stick to the truth, since the deceased don't press libel actions. In his book *Dead Elvis*, Greil Marcus described how Elvis had become a cultural obsession since his death, "a figure made of echoes, not of facts." The legend grew, he wrote, out of "art works, books, movies, dreams; sometimes more than anything cultural noise." So, too, has it gone for JFK, whose legacy has included not only the same literary tributes from the entourage, followed by the critical bios, but also the same creation of civic shrines, the same cultural buzz, the same attention paid to the surviving clan, the same questions raised about the cause of death, the same anniversary observances of the day he died, even the same odd tabloid sightings of the deceased which recall the Resurrection.

In a sense the image of all popular figures is a reflection of the public that follows them. But with a dead figure that reflective process grows exponentially—like the compounding effect of a series of mirrors. As a cultural symbol whose life can now be made into anything with impunity, Kennedy, like Presley, has be-

come, in Marcus's words, "an anarchy of possibilities"—a reflection of the public's mass fears and aspirations and also a constant vehicle for discussing those sentiments. Thus Presley and the Kennedys have evolved into a collection of cultural deities—modern-day equivalents of the Greek gods, who were immortal while sharing the characteristics of the human beings who worshipped them.

That helps explain another unusual fact about the Kennedys: the more negative

*The Kennedys were
 certainly not the first
 politicians to recognize
 the consequences of
 the media era.*

information the public is fed about the family, the more the legend just seems to grow. For that reason Palm Beach may have actually *enhanced* the family's status in the culture. Scandals become public spectacles—occasions for the masses to embroider the myth, the better to show how these superstars who are our gods flout the rules. Did anyone really lose respect for Mick Jagger when he got busted for possession?

Reviewers attacked McGinniss in part because what he wrote about the Kennedys was nothing more than gossip. But his real crime was that he merely recirculated stale gossip: who can make a new parable out of that? To a national audience now as intimately familiar with the grassy knoll, the Dike Bridge on Chappaquiddick, and the story of Jack and Marilyn as prior generations were with the stories of Icarus and of Samson and Delilah, McGinniss came off as something of a false prophet. If mass entertainment is now the civic religion in a country where government can never constitutionally fill that role, it should be no surprise that the path to immortality for a politician today is to become an entertainer in order to become a deity. "Elvis is King," they still write on street corners. Thirty years after his assassination JFK isn't far behind. ☼



The Bomb Squad

*A visit with the members
of a police unit whose work load
may be growing*

THE headquarters of the New York City Police Department Bomb Squad are located on an upper floor of a precinct house in the West Village, a neighborhood known for its unconventional lifestyles. The squad isn't hard to find.

Up a staircase, around a corner, in the middle of a nondescript hallway, there is a bright-red aerial bomb suspended from the ceiling, pointing to a door. Inside, mementos are scattered throughout three large rooms—mortar rounds used as bookends, artillery shells

leaning in a corner, hand grenades, booby traps, land mines—all of them confiscated somewhere in the city. Lieutenant Walter Boser, the commander of the bomb squad, has glass display cases in his office

crammed with military ordnance and home-made bombs that have

been rendered safe, including a white polyvinyl-chloride pipe bomb, the latest fashion on the street, and an ordinary-looking lunch box packed with a thermos and two sticks of TNT. Hanging on his wall is a small, tattered American flag re-

covered from the rubble on the B-2 level of the World Trade Center, a survivor of last February's bombing. In a far corner stand two big filing cabinets devoted to terrorist groups that have threatened to rock New York with other explosions.

The NYPD Bomb Squad is the oldest and largest civilian bomb squad in the nation. This past year was its ninetieth anniversary and proved especially busy, with not only the bombing of the World Trade Center but also allegations of a plot to destroy tunnels and buildings all over town. Since its inception the bomb squad has confronted a host of twentieth-century extremisms, religious and political. Johann Most, an anarchist whose *Science of Revolutionary Warfare* was a seminal handbook on bomb making and urban terrorism, lived peacefully on the Lower East Side until his death, in 1906, writing odes to the wondrous properties of dynamite; since then Bolsheviks, radical trade-unionists, Croatian nationalists, anti-abortionists, and members of the Weather Underground, among others, have

by Eric Schlosser

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brought his theories to life, planting bombs in New York City as a means of expression. In addition the squad has routinely dealt with the schemes of more-prosaic lawbreakers: spurned lovers seeking revenge, rival gangsters, disgruntled employees, mad bombers, thrill seekers, extortionists, teenagers playing with forbidden chemistry. The list is endless. Anywhere from 10,000 to 12,000 bomb threats are made each year in New York City. Fifty to eighty "improvised explosive devices" actually blow up or are defused. Those numbers will certainly rise.

Gray-haired, in his early fifties, and dressed in a conservative blue suit, Lieutenant Boser looks like a partner in a downtown law firm but talks like a tough cop. A thirty-year veteran of the NYPD who plans to retire soon, Boser came to the squad with ample experience investigating arson, a crime in which the motive is usually money. His current job brings many more surprises and carries some heavy responsibilities. The bomb squad conducts security searches for visiting dignitaries, including the President of the United States; dismantles, transports, and disposes of bombs, fireworks, explosives, and dangerous chemicals; and investigates bomb explosions after the fact. Its jurisdiction extends to local airports and federal property, to foreign consulates and the United Nations. If there is a bomb anywhere in the five boroughs of New York, Boser's officers must contend with it.

"I will not jeopardize lives to protect property," Boser stressed in a conversa-

tion recently. Buildings can be repaired in a way that human beings cannot. His overriding concern is the safety of the public—and of the bomb squad. Its procedures have been devised to minimize the risk of injury, and its equipment is state-of-the-art. The nature of the threat changes constantly, however, as bombs grow more sophisticated. All thirty-six of the NYPD's bomb technicians are graduates of the FBI's Hazardous Devices School, in Huntsville, Alabama, and return there every eighteen months for retraining. As of this writing, in the seven years that Boser has been commander, not a single member of the bomb squad has been killed or injured by an improvised explosive device. That is an impressive statistic, given that one bomb technician was killed and seven were maimed in the decade prior to his arrival. But it is a statistic that could be rendered obsolete in a flash, by one false move. Despite his many administrative duties and his frequent contact with the FBI, the Secret Service, UN security, Interpol, and other urban bomb-squad commanders, Boser always joins officers on the scene when his instinct tells him a real bomb is involved. The vast majority of suspicious packages yield contents that are harmless: newspapers, dirty clothes, boom boxes, sexual aids, dead animals, and in one instance the skeletal remains of a human hand. The bomb squad practices incessantly, with dummy bombs and live explosives, to ward off complacency. Boser told me, and other bomb technicians re-

peated again and again during my week with the squad, almost like a mantra, the phrase that helps prevent stupid mistakes and keeps minds focused on the task at hand: "It's a bomb until it's not a bomb."

CHEMICAL explosives are unstable substances that can be rapidly converted into gases of much greater volume. The process by which they detonate is similar to the burning of a log in a fireplace—except that unlike the burning of a log, which is slow and steady, the combustion of an explosive is nearly instantaneous, accompanied by shock, and very loud. With high explosives it is the blast wave that produces the most-devastating effects. At the point of detonation hot expanding gases exert pressure on the surrounding atmosphere of about 1.4 million pounds per square inch, rushing away from the explosion at speeds up to 13,000 miles per hour. This huge mass of compressed air, as an FBI manual evocatively describes it, "rolls outward in a spherical pattern . . . like a giant wave, weighing tons, smashing and shattering any object in its path."

At the bomb squad's firing range on Rodman's Neck, a peninsula jutting into Long Island Sound, I watched practice detonations of some typical high explosives. Sergeant Jerry Hoag was showing two trainees how to insert a blasting cap into a tube of Tovex, reminding them that as a rule, with explosives "you never want to push too hard." Officers Charles Hill and Paul Yukiw listened intently; before learning to defuse such things, they have to know how to use them. The Tovex, wrapped in a pink casing, might with the right label have passed for a Hebrew National salami. As we knelt in a blasting pit, watching Hill tentatively crimp the tube, the steady sound of gunfire came from the nearby NYPD practice range. The blasting pits look like bomb craters a hundred feet in diameter, with thirty-foot berms sloping away from the centers to funnel blast waves skyward. When the priming was nearly complete, I realized that Philip Brown, one of the bomb-squad detectives, was no longer standing beside me but had retreated twenty yards to the entrance of the pit. "There's got to be someone left to pick up the pieces," he explained, and it wasn't a joke. Accidents happen, even under ideal conditions, even with the most conscientious bomb



Detective Dan McNally dons an armored suit during drills

technicians, owing to the fickle nature of explosives. Whenever there is a practice detonation, an ambulance with paramedics parks a few hundred feet down the road.

Earlier in the day Detective Karen Engdahl, the only female bomb technician in the squad's history, tall and blonde and able to hold her own in any exchange of NYPD sarcasm, had given me a demonstration of how an "explosives-detection canine" does its job. Every explosive exudes some trace chemical, and expensive mechanical "sniffers" have been invented that can detect a few parts per billion in a sample of air. But none has yet proved more efficient than the nose of a dog. The bomb squad's six Labrador retrievers are familiar with the scent of common explosives. They are trained never to touch a bomb when they come upon it, just to sit nearby and await their reward. No amount of affection could satisfy Max, a sweet-faced beige Lab. It was hard to believe that his little nostrils could mean the difference between life and death for Presidents, Kings, Prime Ministers. After Engdahl hid six ounces of dynamite in a large squad room, Max rushed inside, tail wagging, and required exactly eighteen seconds to find it.

The ground shook when the Tovex exploded, and there was a stiff burst of wind, the blast wave, which I could feel in my bones from a distance of 500 feet. At closer range the blast wave is not like getting hit by a brick wall; it is more like having one pass right through you. Other detonations soon followed. A piece of rubbery explosive called Detasheet, identical in size and shape to a twenty-page manuscript, tore a steel-belted radial tire into small fragments, scattering them all over the pit and up its high berms. Half a stick of dynamite, placed on the fire wall of a Toyota subcompact, hurled the hood 250 feet into the air, embedded the steering column in the driver's seat, and blew the speedometer into the trunk. The sound of these explosions made the background small-arms fire seem like so many snaps, crackles, and pops. Before it was detonated, I held a piece of C-4 plastic explosive about the size of a baseball. It felt slightly greasy and granular, but otherwise indistinguishable from my daughter's Play-Doh. I asked what would happen if it went off in my hand. Engdahl



A practice inspection at the bomb squad's firing range, in the Bronx

said, "You'd be turned into a pink mist." The trainees, the paramedics, and I were sobered by what this small white ball did to the already damaged Toyota. Exploded a few feet behind the right front wheel, it lifted the undercarriage to within inches of the roof, and reduced the rest of the car to scrap.

The largest detonation I witnessed at Rodman's Neck used less than a pound and a half of explosives. The bomb at the World Trade Center contained roughly 1,400 pounds.

THE idea of killing someone with a package full of explosives dates back at least to the sixteenth century, when "infernal machines" were sometimes disguised as jewelry boxes or casks of wine. Bombs nowadays can be hidden in anything from a manila envelope to a cartridge pen, and can be detonated remotely with shortwave transmitters, garage-door openers, cellular phones. Unlike rounds of ammunition, which are mass-produced, every improvised explosive device bears the "signature" of the bomb maker, in subtle details and idiosyncrasies. Detective Joseph Putkowski, an ex-Marine welterweight boxer who still looks the part, showed me some of his own creations: half a dozen cigar boxes rigged with dummy booby traps to keep his fellow squad members sharp. Each one employed a simple yet wickedly ingenious method of completing an electrical circuit—a mousetrap striking tinfoil, sliding wire loops, a spring, a

mercury switch. If the device was handled improperly, a buzzer went off. No matter how much I expected it, that buzzer was always startling.

Intense and passionate about his work, Putkowski described the ease with which bomb-making components can be obtained today. Everything you need for a complex electronic detonator is available at a store like Radio Shack. Dynamite can be bought over the counter in about half of the fifty states. Most large sporting-goods stores sell black powder. For the more adventuresome and foolhardy, powerful explosives can be made at home by combining some rather mundane ingredients. Putkowski prefers defusing bombs that have been assembled with competence. It is the amateur jobs, with their loose wiring and faulty connections, that make him nervous. But these, along with overcomplicated devices, often kill the bomb maker before the bomb squad ever gets a call.

The squad members have access to a wide array of tools and equipment for safely handling bombs. One of the most useful is a portable X-ray machine, about the size of a large Dustbuster, which in thirty seconds gives a peek into a suspicious package. When a bomb is discovered, it can sometimes be disarmed by a water disrupter (a narrow steel tube capped at one end with its own explosive charge, filled with three ounces of water, and sealed with plastic wrap or a condom), which fires a burst of water strong enough to punch through wood an inch

thick. An electrical circuit takes approximately three milliseconds to complete; water from the disrupter strikes the target in less than one, stopping the firing train before the bomb can explode. Whenever an explosive device must be transported to Rodman's Neck for disposal, it is placed inside a total-containment vessel, a bright-yellow globe that looks like a diving bell. Made of HY80, the same resilient alloy used in the hulls of nuclear submarines, a TCV can contain a very big explosion. On videotape I watched

Ideally, a bomb technician would never have to touch a bomb; a robot would simply pick it up and place it in a TCV. Too often, however, events stray from the ideal. A bomb may be located somewhere the robot cannot reach. Or the robot may be having a bad day. In those situations and many others a bomb technician must rely on his most invaluable tool: his bare hands. Before going "on target"—that is, anywhere near a suspicious package—the officer puts on a bomb suit, an outfit that gives him the appearance of an olive-

can be thirty degrees hotter inside the suit than outside it. Visibility is extremely limited. The blower is so loud that you cannot hear a nearby conversation, though some officers find the steady whirr oddly comforting. The suit affords excellent protection against bomb fragments, but can do little to save an officer from the effects of a strong blast wave, the overpressure that ruptures soft tissue and vital organs. Beyond a certain point the bomb suit is useless, a hindrance. According to one report, three bomb techni-



Detectives and a bomb-sniffing associate in a sweep at the Waldorf-Astoria before a dinner for Al Gore

ten pounds of dynamite being detonated inside one; the TCV leaped a foot or so and then hissed like a kettle as black smoke poured out.

The bomb squad has a number of robots that can scoot up to a bomb and perform all sorts of tasks. A robot can climb stairs, send back color-television images, take X-rays, lift an object weighing more than a hundred pounds, fire a water disrupter, and shoot special shotgun rounds to unlock car doors. In keeping with the character of this bomb squad, none of the robots has a cute name.

green astronaut. The bomb suit weighs sixty-four pounds and covers the front of the body, chin to toe, in thick armor. One or two other officers have to help the technician climb into it. There is no armor on the back (hence the adage "Never turn your back on a bomb"), and the hands remain wholly unprotected. The round helmet has a blower attached to keep the visor from fogging up. I wore the full gear for a few minutes one day and couldn't wait to take it off. A bomb suit is stiff, clumsy, and uncomfortable. During summer months the temperature

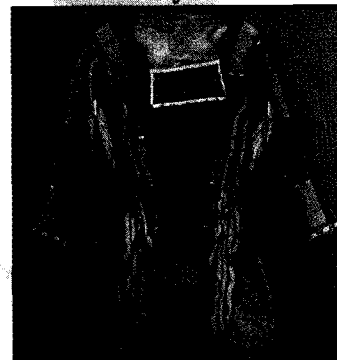
cians in Northern Ireland were vaporized by a large bomb explosion and literally "vanished from the face of the earth."

EVERY member of the bomb squad volunteered to serve on it and earns the same pay as any other New York City police officer. The average age on the squad is forty-three; the youngest bomb technician is Sergeant Mark Torre, who is thirty, and whose wife is expecting their first child. Most of the squad members would pass unnoticed in a Wall Street crowd at lunch hour. And they

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have a certain style. On a ninety-degree day the jacket but not the tie comes off before an officer dons a bomb suit. The turnover rate is low, and bomb technicians generally stay with the squad for a decade before retiring. Lieutenant Boser looks for "seasoned, grounded, reliable" officers. They typically have had long experience in the NYPD before joining the squad, and as a result have already seen a lot of strange things. Roughly half come from the Emergency Services Unit, the branch that deals with subway accidents, snipers, hostage situations, the daily crises of this city. Applicants to the squad undergo extensive physical and psychological testing. Good hand-eye coordination is important; unconscious suicidal impulses, a tendency toward anxiety, and an unnatural fascination with explosions are some disqualifying traits. Fifty to seventy-five applications are received for each new spot on the squad. It can take a year and a half to get an interview with Boser. Experience with explosives is helpful but not required. There are no openings at the moment.

The bomb squad is divided into six teams, whose members have all sorts of unusual backgrounds and skills. Detectives James Corbett and Brian Tuohy, veterans of the Emergency Services Unit, have climbed every bridge in Manhattan more than once to persuade people not to jump. Officer John Harvey is a former Army engineer and a registered nurse. Detective Tony Ruggirello served in Army demolitions during the Vietnam

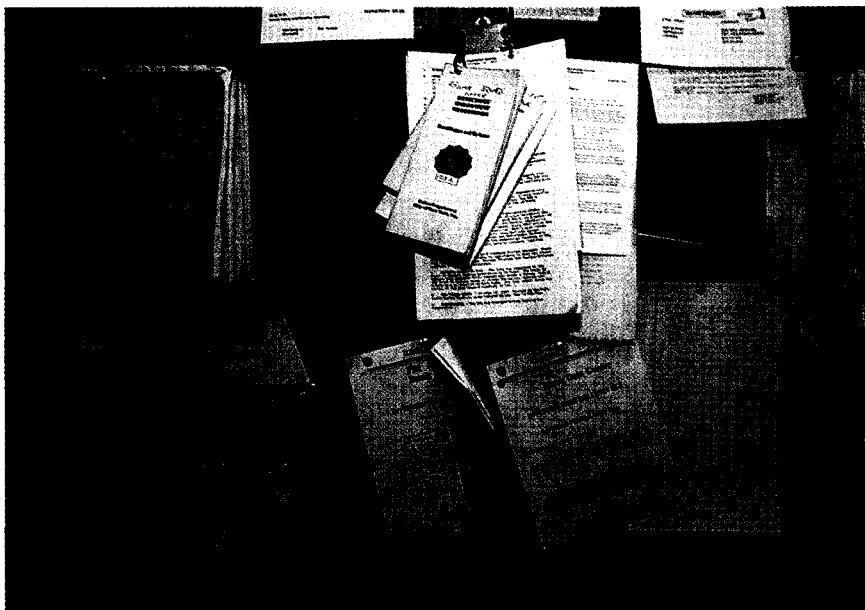
War, is a champion skeet shooter, and meticulously handcrafts explosive charges for the water disrupter. Detective Dennis Hunt is a former "sandhog," trained in commercial blasting, who has helped dig water and subway tunnels. Detective Richard Hackford, whose father and grandfather were New York City police officers, has some familiarity with the biggest bombs of all, which he gained in the Navy, loading ballistic missiles with multiple nuclear warheads into the launch tubes of submarines.

At times it seems that the most important criterion for membership in the bomb squad is a refusal to discuss one's own heroics. The bomb technicians' great modesty is both genuine and pragmatic. Detective Donald Sadowy explains, "If you blow your own horn here, the other guys will destroy you." But squad members can be persuaded to describe one another's exploits. I heard about how Sadowy and Detective Glenn Welch, in a cramped, hot storage room littered with fuses, blasting caps, and other explosives, opened a suitcase with Mickey Mouse's face on it and found seventy-eight sticks of dynamite; about how Boser calmly chatted with a woman who was wearing a necklace of kitchen matches, holding a lighter in each hand, and threatening to ignite a vanload of gasoline bombs on the steps of the United Nations; about how Detective Kevin Barry, who has the genial manner of a prep school headmaster, and his supervisor, Sergeant Joseph Ahern, wrestled with a

human bomb, struggling to defuse a powerful explosive device strapped to his chest while other officers pinned down his arms to prevent metal bands on his wrists from touching and completing a circuit. And much more.

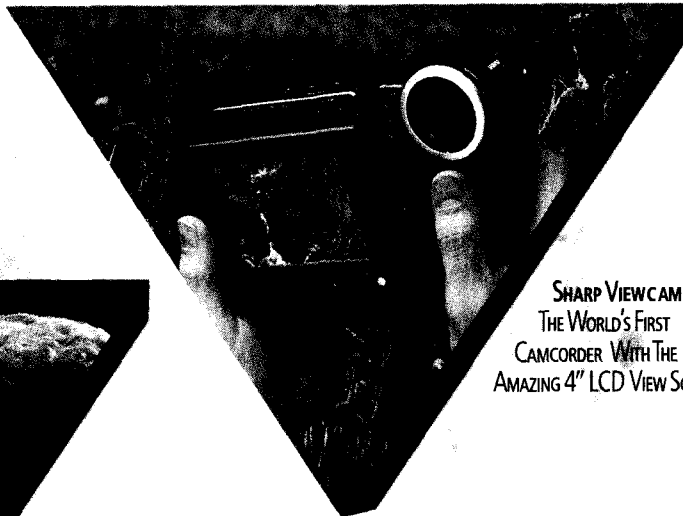
When the bomb squad arrives at a scene, the police have already barricaded the street. Fire trucks and an ambulance are on hand. The bomb technicians make a grand entrance, parting the crowd. Whereas many police officers these days must endure having rocks and bottles tossed at them, the bomb squad gets a very different reception. As Dennis Hunt says, "People are either glad to see us—or they don't want to be anywhere near us." All the squad members, including Boser, downplay the occupational hazards. By far the most dangerous police work, they argue, is performed by the average policeman on the beat, who while discussing last night's ball game with his partner may turn a corner and stumble upon a robbery in progress. The bomb squad usually operates in a controlled environment, with special equipment and enough time to consider different options. Richard Hackford says, "I never have to worry about someone shooting me in the back."

During the week I spent with the squad, three suspicious packages were examined. None of them contained bombs. A month may pass without an explosive device, and then four can turn up in a night. Countless moments and images stick with me: Detective Barry's shiny brown oxfords peeking from the back of his bomb suit as he walked toward a small package in front of police headquarters; a wild ride down the wrong side of York Avenue, with Sergeant Hoag expertly dodging pedestrians and oncoming cars; the absolute stillness of an evacuated office complex as Detective Welch headed down the hall with an X-Acto knife to open a suspected mail bomb; the pungent, clovelike smell of dynamite. Most of the squad members have spouses and children. They admit to being afraid every time they approach a bomb, yet do their job with grace and good humor. When an officer emerges from a bomb suit, hot, flushed, and smiling, everybody nearby shares a subdued, giddy feeling of relief. Personal courage seems a rare, almost archaic quality these days. I observed some of the real thing. ☞



Explosives-related notices posted at the bomb squad's headquarters

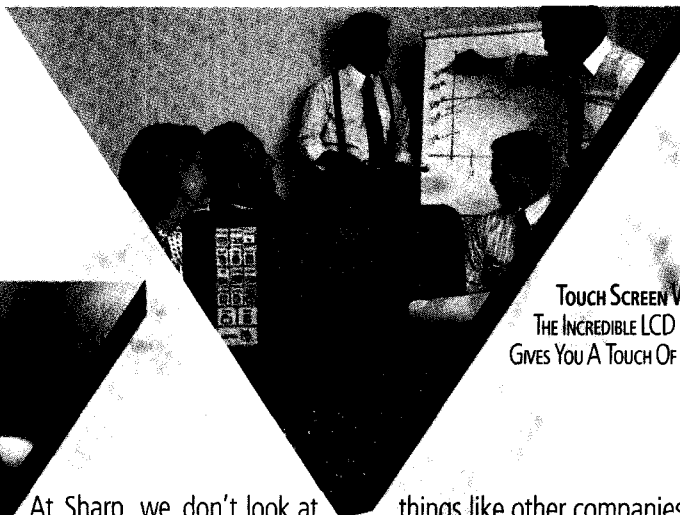
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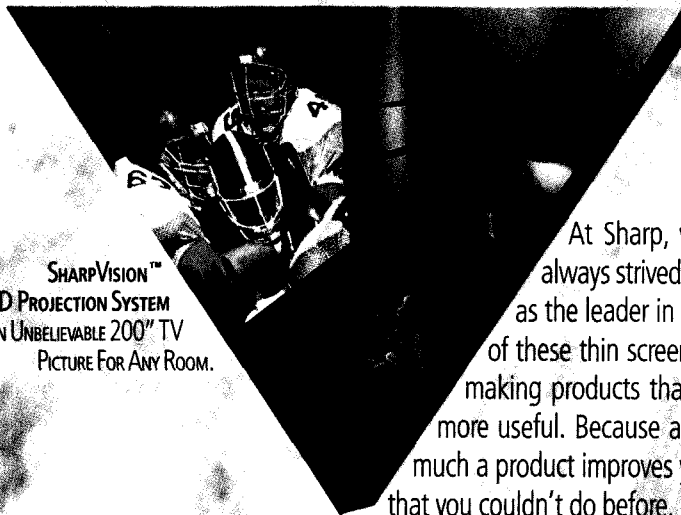
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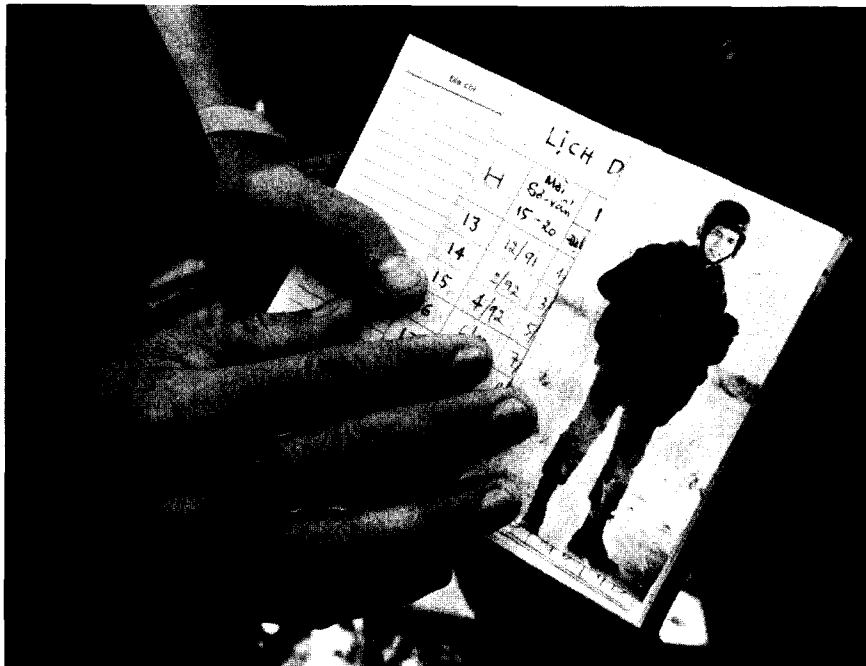
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LEAH MELNICK/IMPACT VISUALS

In Vietnam a former prisoner makes his case for resettlement in America

Timing Is Everything

The country's newest Vietnamese refugees missed the boat the first time, when Saigon fell. In several ways they are missing the boat again

THE South Vietnamese evacuees of 1975 were sure they would be back in their Saigon homes within months. Their stay in the United States would not even be long enough to qualify as an exile. But the Hanoi government, led by the jungle soldiers who banished South Vietnam from the map, has proved durable, and as a result the United States continues to inherit tens of thousands of new refugees every year. The community of Vietnamese-Americans now numbers more than 700,000, and is close to the size of much older communities of Japanese-, Korean-, and Indian-Americans.

Although the Vietnamese in America

were at first a homogenous group, in the course of five separate waves of immigration they have encompassed a diverse cross-section of Vietnamese society, including Kinh Vietnamese (the majority), Chinese, Khmer, and people of at least a dozen other ethno-linguistic backgrounds. The refugees belong to a wide

by Lowell Weiss

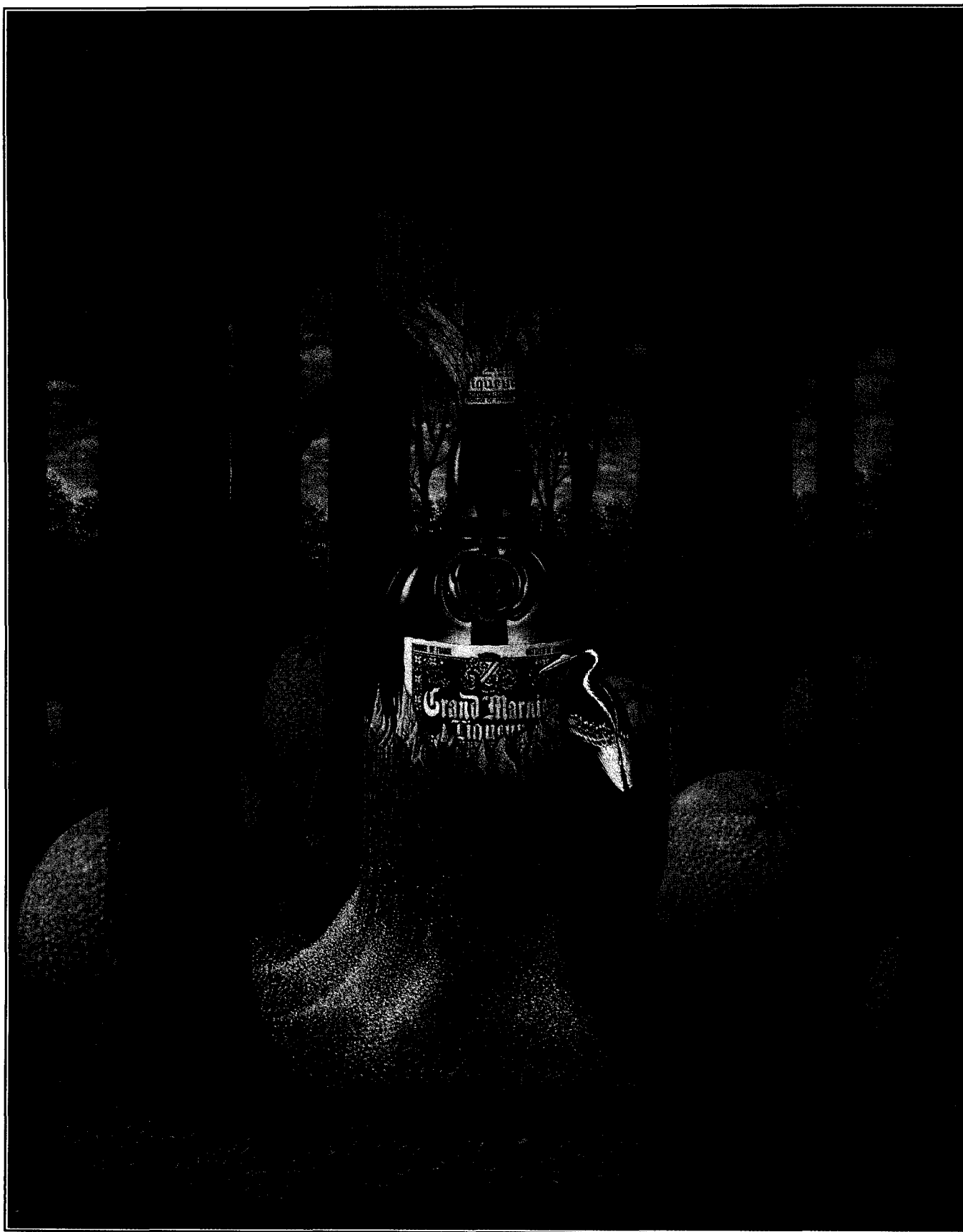
range of religions, including Catholicism, Buddhism, and Cao Daiism, the last being a religious sect that regards Victor Hugo, Sun Yat-sen, and William Shakespeare, among others, as guiding spirits. The Kinh are also divided by long-standing regional differences, which have far more impact on language and world view than such differences

typically do in America. The northerners among the refugees, who fled to South Vietnam immediately after the fall of the French at Dien Bien Phu, in 1954, were weaned on harsh weather and infertile soils and are known for their rigorous work ethic. The native southerners, in contrast, have for centuries been thought to exude the attitude of a people who were "born with a spoonful of rice in their mouths." And, finally, there are distinctions in education and class status which cross all demographic categories.

With most ethnic groups, demographic factors such as these often determine how well new immigrants and refugees manage to reconstruct their lives in this country. Vietnamese-Americans represent a major exception to that pattern: the most successful and least successful groups have very similar demographic profiles. Both groups have disproportionate numbers of ethnic Kinh, Catholics, transplanted northerners, and those who held military and political positions in South Vietnam.

This similarity is a cruel irony, but it is no accident. As one might expect, many of the successful Vietnamese, who, true to popular stereotypes, have overachieving children, new cars, and close-knit families, are those who were evacuated from Saigon in 1975. In what amounts to an unplanned experiment in human resilience, a large portion of their South Vietnamese demographic group—primarily families headed by younger officials and officers—did not leave Vietnam at that time. Members of this stay-behind group were not included in official contingency plans, unable to buy their way out of the country, or not convinced that leaving was the safest option. This group represented the greatest threat to Hanoi's rule, and many of them (mostly men but also some women) were soon shepherded into "re-education camps"—an Orwellian euphemism for brutal jungle prisons.

Now that the Hanoi government has closed down all the re-education camps, former political prisoners are arriving daily in the United States under a special State Department resettlement program. Every one of the former prisoners has been permanently and often debilitatingly scarred, and most are left with ambi-



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*As one might expect,
many of the successful
Vietnamese are those who
were evacuated from
Saigon in 1975*

tions only for their children. Even those prisoners who arrived several years ago show few signs of rising out of poverty and improving their prospects the way that those who came earlier did. More than 20,000 arrived last year alone, and as many as 100,000 more are expected to arrive in the next few years.

The timing could hardly have been worse for the former prisoners. President Clinton has recently edged closer to normalizing relations with Vietnam, which would in effect welcome the country back into the community of nations. What makes this particularly painful for the former prisoners is that successful 1975 evacuees, especially younger professionals and businesspeople, are leading the charge for normalization. Even some of those who are founding members of right-wing terrorist groups (a typically unsubtle name is the Vietnamese Party to Exterminate the Communists and Restore the Nation) have started quietly returning to Vietnam to make under-the-table business deals and capitalize on Vietnam's newly booming economy.

Had the recent immigrants escaped from Vietnam in 1975 or shortly thereafter, they, too, might be jockeying for business opportunities, or at least warming to the possibility of returning to Vietnam as visitors. Instead the newcomers simply feel betrayed by the evacuees who are doing so. "A number of those who came before us are changing their mind about the VC government," says one former prisoner who arrived in Boston in 1990. "Some are people who have no education, no political awareness. We never blame these people. . . . Who we blame and hate are the leaders during the war, politicians, people with high education, Ph.D.s trained in the U.S. or Europe. They are trying to shake hands with the VC government. They think they can change them. We know there's no way."

UNLIKE its Vietnam War campaigns, the U.S. government's initial efforts to resettle the refugees were relatively swift and efficient. By the end of May, 1975, the U.S. armed forces had transported by ship and plane 120,000 Vietnamese—and 5,500 Cambodians and Laotians—to four domestic military bases, initiating the most intensive refugee-resettlement program in U.S. history. The few refugees who could show that they had at least \$4,000 per family member were permitted to leave the military bases immediately to make their own arrangements. The rest had to wait, like orphans, for American families, religious groups, or companies (looking for cheap labor) to sponsor them.

The resettlement planners, having learned from failed attempts with the Cuban exiles of the 1960s, went to great lengths to distribute the needy refugees geographically, even if that meant stranding lone Vietnamese families in rural Alaska. But by the time the next wave of refugees—the boat people—began arriving in the country, in 1978, Vietnamese had inevitably begun clustering. The majority of the first boat people were ethnically Chinese, and many found housing and support in urban Chinatowns. (These refugees, who speak Vietnamese with distinctively flattened tones, had taken to the seas when the Vietnamese government started cracking down in the southern city of Cholon, which had been the hub of a large Chinese merchant class for more than a century.) The group that fled immediately after the Chinese was composed largely of coastal fishermen, who had easy access to the most common route of escape. These boat people found economic opportunity (and, unfortunately, intense racial prejudice) along the Gulf Coast. Cities that acquired large Vietnamese populations include Houston, New Orleans, Chicago, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Arlington, Virginia. But in the 1980s the place that attracted the most new refugees, and the most secondary migrants, was California—the weather was warm, welfare benefits were generous, public education was excellent, and the economy had just begun to boom.

Today more than half of all U.S. Vietnamese live in California—perhaps 125,000 in the north and 275,000 in the south. Strangely enough, the highest con-

centration of Vietnamese outside Vietnam is in Orange County, which is often assumed to be one of the whitest counties in America. Although the established Vietnamese, who vote heavily Republican, have not changed Orange County's conservative voting patterns, they have left their mark in almost every other way. The major example is Little Saigon, in the otherwise unremarkable town of Westminster.

For those who have visited the real Saigon, Orange County's version won't conjure up images of the original. Most notably, there are no obvious red-light districts, French-influenced high-rise buildings, or bicycle taxis. Essentially, Little Saigon is a clean, unassuming mile-and-a-half-long strip of suburban shopping malls, packed with about 1,000 stores, offices, and restaurants. The concentration of signs written in Vietnamese (easily distinguishable from other Asian lettering because Vietnamese uses Roman characters) is the only real giveaway. The no-frills architecture is almost completely post-1960s southern California. (One exception is the prominent Today Plaza mall, which actually looks more Chinese than Vietnamese; Frank Jao, who developed it and many other malls, is ethnically Chinese.)

But inside Little Saigon's buildings the effect is pure Vietnam. Even in the better restaurants there are very few Caucasians—many fewer, in fact, than one finds in most overcrowded, intimidating inner-city Chinatowns. The area has twenty-five Vietnamese-language newspapers, and its stores carry every comfort of home—even, in the case of the area's thirty busy travel agencies, home itself. And the country's first Vietnamese elected official, the gregarious and blunt Westminster city councilman Tony Lam,



Little Saigon's nightclub set

can be seen regularly holding forth with constituents over bowls of traditional noodle soup.

No other city in America has such a large and prosperous Little Saigon, and though Vietnamese are among the country's fastest-growing minority groups, probably none ever will, because Little Saigon is the product of a uniquely confluence of factors. The original Vietnamese settlers ended up in Orange County because the area was home to many U.S. veterans of the war, who made trips to the county's Camp Pendleton after the evacuation of Saigon to sponsor South Vietnamese they had worked and fought beside. At the time, Orange County had very few immigrants, and consequently a wealth of available manual jobs, so the Vietnamese had little trouble finding work. That is not to say that the first few years were easy. The manual jobs were demeaning, especially for formerly wealthy and prominent men, and partly as a result the rates of domestic disputes and divorce increased markedly. But the entry-level jobs allowed the Orange County refugees to wean themselves from public assistance very quickly. In other parts of the country jobs were much harder to come by. Like the refugees themselves, the U.S. economy was suffering from the aftershocks of war.

During the 1980s, with Ronald Reagan as President, the California Vietnamese blossomed. Defense industries, heavily concentrated in southern California, provided a steady supply of high-tech assembly and engineering jobs—an irony that was not lost on the war-weary refugees. At the same time, investors from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan were making record investments in American real estate, owing to political and economic skittishness at home. Westminster was attractive to these Chinese investors for two reasons. First, they felt comfortable dealing with the town's ethnically Chinese refugees, many of whom had run South Vietnam's biggest businesses. Second, while real-estate prices were skyrocketing in most of Orange County, Westminster was an undervalued backwater of mobile homes and strawberry fields.

As Chinese money flowed into the community, ethnic Vietnamese, including many boat people, began pooling their

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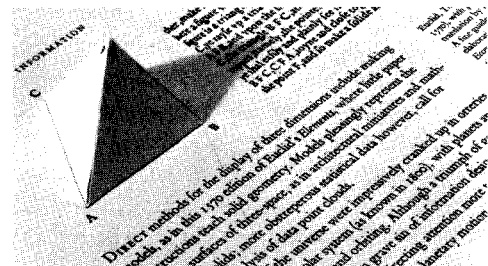
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A former prisoner with her family

own capital by means of time-honored private investment schemes, and they, too, built storefront businesses in the area. Their specialty was professional services such as insurance, medicine, and architecture. "The conditions were perfect for the first- and second-wave refugees," says Yen Do, a former Saigon war reporter who founded the highly respected daily newspaper *Nguoi Viet* (*The Vietnamese People*) in 1978. "Through our entry-level jobs we had an entrée into the professions, and we developed quickly. We bought houses in the nicer suburbs. We started thinking like Americans."

That the initial waves of boat people contributed at all to the growth of Little Saigon is impressive, because their escapes to the United States were far more traumatic than those of the first settlers. For all the careful preparation that went into securing boats and inconspicuously accumulating supplies, many of those who fled were turned back by coastal patrols and sent to prison camps. Those who made it to the open seas were preyed upon by Thai pirates. More than 30 percent of all boat people died at sea. Even those who reached their destinations—Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, or Indonesia—were immediately corralled in disease-ridden refugee camps, where most faced a wait of a year or more before receiving asylum in the West.

For many of the first boat people, especially teenagers and young adults, the ordeal of escape was like high-altitude training for athletes. "I risked my life to come here," says the graphic designer Nam Nguyen, who arrived as a twelve-year-old in 1979. "The main source of my energy is my desire to make the most of my escape." Even many who are not well educated have been so successful in business that they fill Little Saigon's

flashy nouveau-riche nightclub set and have forced some class reshuffling, according to Oanh Ress, who is involved with organizations that provide humanitarian assistance to Vietnam. "Rural people and ordinary soldiers who never had opportunities in Vietnam now own many businesses and are quite rich."

TIMING is everything. The Vietnamese who have arrived since the late 1980s—the former political prisoners and, before them, a large contingent of Amerasians and late-arriving boat people—have fared very poorly. Federal refugee assistance has dropped precipitously, from thirty-six months of benefits in 1975 to only eight months today. Jobs are scarcer. There is a housing crisis. In one sense the existence of a comfortable, self-sufficient community like Little Saigon might seem to give the newest refugees an advantage over their predecessors. But, sadly, it often has the opposite effect. "The former prisoners and the other new arrivals have come into this ghetto and have stayed here," Do says. "They are addicted to the ghetto. They don't need to learn English, and so they don't. Eighty percent of them speak Vietnamese exclusively, and many sit around watching kung fu movies dubbed in Vietnamese." The former prisoners have received much help from Little Saigon's impressive network of not-for-profit assistance programs, but many successful exiles have turned away from newer arrivals. "The former prisoners remind the others of war, and they have been ignored for that reason," says Do's twenty-seven-year-old daughter, Anh, echoing a sentiment familiar to U.S. veterans of the Vietnam War. "And people are too busy and ambitious to help them. People just don't have the time to take these people by the hand and to teach them English and to get them out of their depression."

The problems are magnified in cities with smaller Vietnamese populations. Although the newcomers who live in Little Saigon may receive little direct help, at least they indirectly benefit from the prosperity of the successful Vietnamese; shopkeepers and professionals have a huge stake in keeping Little Saigon safe and clean, and they reinvest much of their profits there. In metropolitan Boston, which is typical of cities with mid-sized Vietnamese populations (and, inci-

dentally, is home to the last President of South Vietnam), there is little reinvestment and almost no contact between successful and unsuccessful refugees. As soon as refugees begin to earn a decent living, they flee the low-rent Vietnamese hub in the Dorchester section of the city to establish churches, temples, stores, and restaurants in the suburbs.

Unlike Little Saigon, the Dorchester enclave feels at once depressed and tense. Not only has it been left exclusively to the most vulnerable refugees; it is also an inner-city melting pot of blacks, Latinos, and Irish-Americans which is often on the verge of boiling over. Unemployment among the Dorchester Vietnamese is high, approximately 20 percent—50 percent if one includes all those who are still receiving federal refugee-assistance checks. There are few Vietnamese-owned businesses, and those that exist almost never hire people outside the proprietors' family. Prior English-language training and military education have not led to jobs, so the newcomers play up more-tangible skills: under "work experience" one ten-year prisoner's résumé reads, "Re-education camp in Quang Nam province. Kitchen helper and farmer." Stitching together Red Sox caps or stocking merchandise at Filene's Basement discount department store is considered a good position.

The physical and psychological common denominator of newcomers on both coasts and everywhere in between has been severe headaches and depression. Health-care providers attribute the most acute trauma to the difficulty of adapting to the new country. The first shock is that of unmet expectations. Often family members and friends gave inaccurately rosy reports in letters home. Many in the first groups of former prisoners had heard rumors—perhaps spread maliciously by

(Continued on page 44)

*The newcomers show
few signs of improving
their prospects
the way that those who
came earlier did.*

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW

INSIDE:

Film

A Gorgeous
Green Papaya

Jazz

The Sun Ra Space
Chronicles

Dance

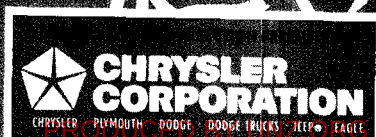
The Boundless
Fantastic

Theater

Lincoln
as "Foundling
Father"

Pop

Folk Rock
for the Thinker



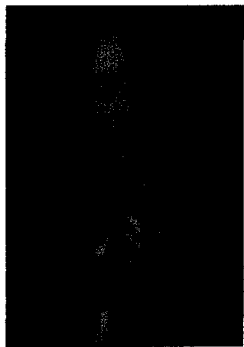
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Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

SEEING THINGS

British director Michael Apter (35 Up) takes a break from his septennial inquiries into British class structure with a thriller that peeps up one of the oldest tricks in the suspense book. *Blink* stars a radiant Madeleine Stowe (*The Last of the Mohicans*) as Emma, a blind Chicago musician who, after regaining partial sight through surgery, witnesses a murder and becomes the killer's potential next victim. This is not all bad, since it brings her in enviably close contact with the delectable Aidan Quinn, who plays a troubled cop assigned to the case. Apter uses some nifty visual turns to play with Emma's sight and our certainty that we know who did it. Stowe's gifted performance renders Emma as an angry, mistrustful, but spirited soul who does her own detective work. But that doesn't excuse Apter's willingness to resort to the best-selling gambit of reserving almost all the movie's graphic violence for women.

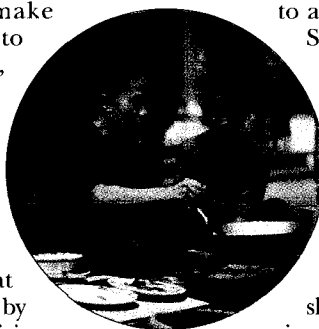


Blink's Madeleine Stowe

JOYCE RUDOLPH

CONSIDERING THIS WOMAN'S WORK

As Asian films make steady inroads into American theaters, there is a danger that distributors will favor pictures that meet Western expectations of "Oriental" film and temperament—like *The Scent of Green Papaya*, which won the Camera D'Or prize at Cannes last year. Directed by the Vietnamese-born Parisian filmmaker Tran Anh Hung, and shot entirely on a French sound stage, this gracefully languorous film tracks the daily life of Mui, a country beauty with downcast lashes who becomes a servant



Green Papaya

to a bourgeois family in 1950s Saigon. *Papaya* is effective as a celebration of women's work (the scenes of food preparation are stunning) but takes a dive into naive sentimentality when it elevates servility to sainthood. After endless approving closeups of Mui smiling beatifically as she inspects a deeply symbolic heavy load, my heart went out to the spoiled fiancée of Mui's master, who smashes priceless vases when thwarted and thus finds herself dumped in favor of the help. A lucky escape, I call it.

THE SUMMER HOUSE DIVIDED

Why is it that the few films with roles for older women so often condemn the most distinguished actresses to dotty-old-lady clowning? I winced to see the great Jeanne Moreau thus reduced in *The Summer House*, a British comedy of manners directed by Waris Hussein. Moreau chews up all available scenery as a flamboyant, over-sexed old woman from Egypt who waltzes into the wastes of residential

South London to save a repressed young bride (the luminous Lena Headey, last seen in *Waterland*) from wedding the boorish bore next door. But two others subvert the sketchiness of this mildly amusing comedy in search of a plot. The excellent Julie Walters (transformed be-



Julie Walters and Jeanne Moreau

yond recognition from her cheeky working-class waif in *Educating Rita*) is all perm, pearls, and suburban prissiness as the bride's mother. And the show is quietly stolen by Joan Plowright, who over the years has grown nimble at lifting the cutest dame role into high irony. As the groom's mother, a homebound widow who has grown to look alarmingly like her pet pug, Plowright injects a wry intelligence into the shopworn contours of her character by strategically underplaying her. You'll recoup the price of admission just by hearing the Shakespearean actress murmur, like some laid-back Lady Bracknell in a down-market tearoom, "Shall we risk the trifle?"

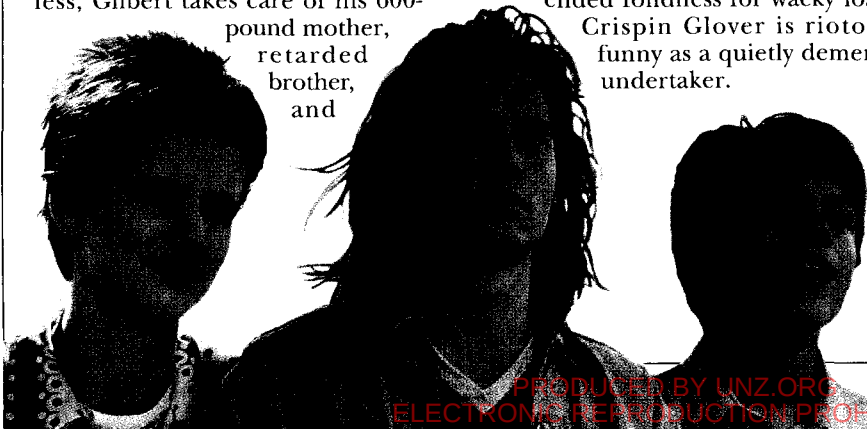
Ella Taylor is a film columnist for Mirabella.

HALLSTROM IN HOLLYWOOD

Swedish director Lasse Hallstrom (*My Life as a Dog*, *Once Around*) reads family life as an antic tragic-comedy of random brutality, kindness, and insanity. His latest movie, *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, stars Johnny Depp as an amiable schlemiel with the smile of an angel who sleepwalks through his humdrum life as a grocery clerk in a small Iowa town. Aimless and hopeless, Gilbert takes care of his 600-

troubled sisters and carries on a desultory affair with a restless married woman (Mary Steenburgen) twice his age. Until, that is, a weirdly enticing stranger (*Cape Fear*'s Juliette Lewis) arrives in town and shakes him out of his emotional fog. Although Hallstrom has slightly tamed his warped outlook for this studio movie, *Gilbert Grape* retains his rambling, loose-ended fondness for wacky losers. Crispin Glover is riotously funny as a quietly demented undertaker.

pound mother, retarded brother, and



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FIRST LOOK PICTURES

SIMON MEIN

Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND LAURA JACOBS

DISCOVERING AMERICA

Topping *American Theatre's* list of "truly promising new works" to be performed by this country's 200-plus professional theater companies this season, *The America Play* pursues its purposes through conversational yet highly patterned language that the magazine defines, with palpable if understandable awkwardness, as "pomo-afro-lingo." Linear thinkers, stay home. The playwright Suzan-Lori Parks weaves her spell around a key figure she calls the Foundling Father, who bears "a strong resemblance" to Abraham Lincoln, long dead. "Someone," we are told, "remarked that he played Lincoln so well that he ought to be shot." So he launches his "act," offering customers the opportunity to shoot him (with blanks) at the price of a penny. Through much of Act One he sits in the box of a dark theater and laughs, the customers fire, and he



The Foundling Father

slumps in his chair. The play's second act resounds with talk of echoes and the "Great Hole of History." (A musical theatergoer may spot in the writing techniques of repetition and variation like those of minimalism. A devotee of painting may visualize the brash vigor of folk art.) For an epigraph Parks turns to John Locke: "In the beginning, all the world was *America*." Beneath the cracker-barrel surface of her dialogue lurk seething millenarian passions. History, some say, is a nightmare from which we are trying to awaken; surely Parks would agree. Her script is directed by Liz Diamond, whose recent shows at the Yale Rep, in New Haven, have set the profession abuzz. *The America Play* runs there from January 13 to February 5 (203-432-1234) before transferring to the New York Shakespeare Festival (from February 22; 212-598-7150). —A.B.

NO MAN'S NEWCOMERS



Harold Pinter

It may be possible to serve one's material *too* well. Consider Harold Pinter's *No Man's Land*, which this month has its first major revival anywhere since the original London production of 1975. As the garrulous poet Spooner and his new acquaintance Hirst, a man of substance, a shabby John Gielgud and a baronial Ralph Richardson performed a joust as mesmerizing for its suggestions of existential mystery as for its display of competitive thespian cunning. Who could follow such an act? At the time, people mentioned Bette Davis and Katharine Hepburn—a rumor as desperate as it was idle. At New York's Roundabout Theater, Christopher Plummer is Spooner, and Jason Robards plays Hirst. Good luck to them. Of all Pinter's enigmas, *No Man's Land* may prove the worthiest to endure and, in its wicked way, the most fun. (Previews begin January 8; 212-869-8400.) —A.B.

DOORWAY TO PARADISE

It will not be revived; perhaps it doesn't deserve revival." So wrote Lincoln Kirstein as he contemplated *Variations pour une Porte et un Soupir* (*Variations for a Door and a Sigh*), one of George Balanchine's strangest ballets, which premiered in 1974.

Kirstein has rarely been wrong, but he was wrong about *Sigh*. In 1987 it was revived to raves—and to snuffy dismissal. Set to Pierre Henry's music of creaking doors (the woman) and submarine burblings (the man), this duet offers a ballerina in a Lulu wig fixed center stage by hundreds of yards of billowing smoky silk belted at her waist. Is she a Weimar doll? a fashion model scaled like a skyscraper? The guy, in gray, rolls around at her feet, fascinated and harassed by her infinity. Some see *Sigh* as the ultimate misogyny: woman as white spider in the world's largest web. Others see it as Mr. B's big joke on avant-garde stage effects. I see it as a key to Balanchine: the female as trapdoor to existence. Judge for yourself when *Sigh* appears in New York City Ballet repertory on January 7, 8, and 22. —L.J.

PIONEERS OF THE OUT-OF-BOUNDS

First there was Pilobolus (named for a fungus), then there was Momix (named for a cow feed), then there was ISO (an acronym for "I'm So Optimistic"). All three companies turn up on dance-season schedules around the world, but they really inhabit the slippery intersection of the Yellow Brick Road and the White Rabbit's hole. ISO Dance is the youngest of these groups, and boasts as a founding member Daniel Ezralow—a wisenheimer of a dancer with wily whirligig moves and an Ivy League intelligence. He's one of the star subjects of Lois Greenfield's startling

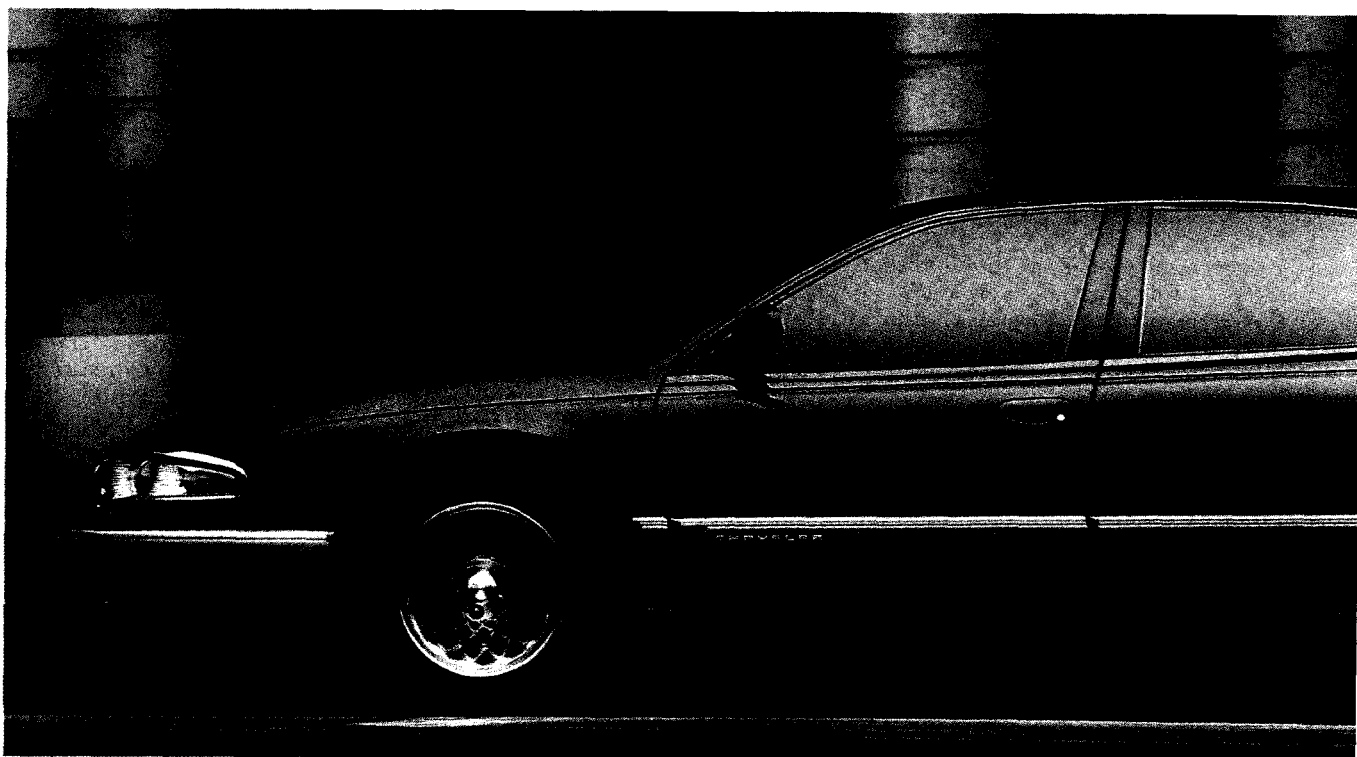
book of dance photography, *Breaking Bounds*. ISO is dancier than the older groups: the company has a *Fantasia*-like sense of flow and transformation. It sweeps into Philadelphia's Annenberg Center on January 6, 7, and 8.

Also this month Pilobolus, the granddaddy of phantasmagoria, will be in Burlington, Vermont, on January 21; Orono, Maine, on January 23; Keene, New Hampshire, on January 26; and Lewiston, Maine, on January 28. —L.J.

Austin Baer is a New York-based writer.
Laura Jacobs is editor in chief of Stagebill.



ISO (left) and Pilobolus (right) defying gravity and convention



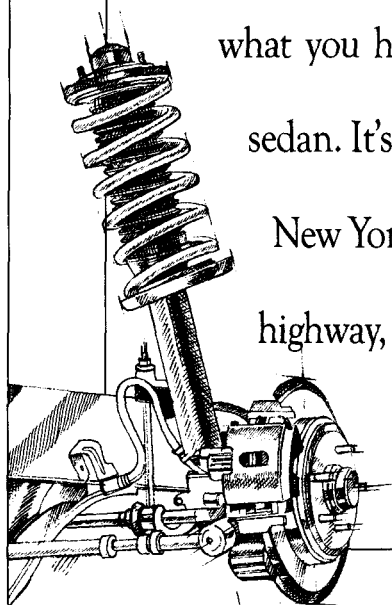
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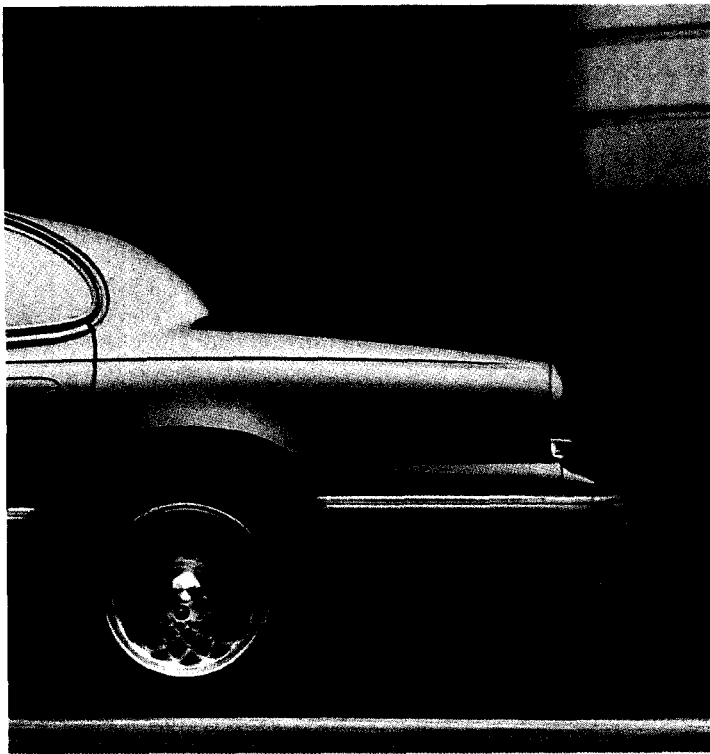
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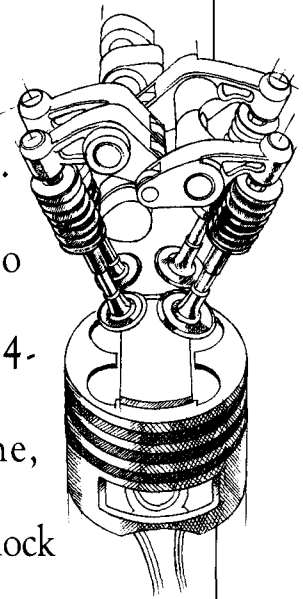
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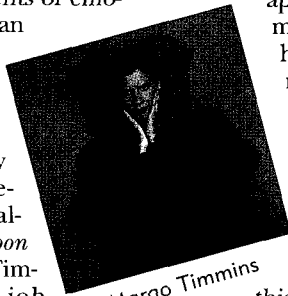
BY CHARLES M. YOUNG AND BOB BLUMENTHAL

RCA RECORDS



FOLK FOR THOUGHT

The Cowboy Junkies play self-conscious folk rock full of words like "Precambrian" and references to William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez. This level of literacy can be a burden in an art form best suited to grand statements of emotion (if you want ideas, read an essay). But the Cowboy Junkies bring just enough irony to salt down their sincerity, and just enough indirection to keep their clarity from descending into predictability. On their fifth album, *Pale Sun, Crescent Moon* (RCA), the singer Margo Timmins does a remarkable job of creating moods while enunciating long strings of words written by her brother Michael Timmins. Stylistically



Margo Timmins

she is descended from Sandy Denny, relying on her resonant soprano to understate her phrasing, as opposed to throwing random piles of technique at the audience. Michael gives his guitar a psychedelic edge not heard on their

countrified previous album, *Black-Eyed Man*, but they keep the feedback down to focus on the vocals. Their theme is love: the dash of infatuation, the marathon of monogamy, and middle-distance events like longing, disillusion, and the repeated decision whether to remain committed. The emotions are subtle, and the Timminses

approach them with haunting melodies, shunning obvious hooks and chant-worthy choruses to put across their message. Michael's strength as a lyricist is increasingly evident, manifesting itself in small moments with large meaning: "And there in the silence they search for / The balance between this fear that they feel / And a love that has graced their lives" ("Ring on the Sill"). The Cowboy Junkies seem to come out of that balance. —C.M.Y.

HAIL THE SUN KING

Sun Ra, who died last May at age 79, was *sui generis*. The pianist-composer claimed origins on the planet Saturn, and for half his life led what he called his Arkestra on galactic excursions linking big bands and bop with African drum choirs and otherworldly sound mutations, introducing various ideas years before they became commonplace.

Sun Ra's maverick ways, and the elusiveness of albums released on his own El Saturn label, made him, as he claimed, the King of the Sub-Underground. For the past two years Evidence Music has been retrieving El Saturn collectors' items from oblivion, cleaning up their sound and correcting inaccurate annotations, and exposing in the process a great unknown jazz oeuvre of the past 40 years.

Evidence's new Sun Ra CDs span two decades of the Arkestra's voyage. *Angels and Demons at Play/The Nubians of Plutonia* and *Fate in a Pleasant Mood/When Sun*

Comes Out (each containing two original LPs) cover 1956–1963, when hard-bop orchestrations coexisted with trans-world exotica. *The Magic City* and *Atlantis*, masterpieces from 1965–1969, weave spongy electric keyboards, cross-rhythmic skeins of percussion, and raw-nerve horn solos into taut and amazingly unified collective improvisations. *Soundtrack to the Film 'Space Is the Place'*, from 1972, summarizes the diverse approaches (including vocal chants and big-band covers) that made Arkestra performances the jazz equivalent of Grateful Dead concerts. —B.B.



Sun Ra

BEAUTIFUL STEELY ANGST

The Belgian group Front 242 claims a stronger classical influence than its American counterparts on the industrial scene. The claim has merit, given the band's symphonic approach to a genre characterized by relentless electronic drumbeats and general harshness. On its latest album, *05:22:09:12 Off* (Epic)—the numbers correspond to the alphabetical order of the letters in



"evil"—the songs aren't so much songs as passages in a larger work that careens from ethereal washes of phased feedback to hydraulic-press dance music. Though the music explores the darker emotions, it isn't exceptionally brutal when compared with other industrial acts. It is, however, exceptionally beautiful, energizing, and packed with ideas, which members of Front 242 are loath to explain. "Frustration" is as close as they get to describing their motivation, and that seems accurate. Imagine having your flight canceled at a busy airport when you have pressing business at your destination. You're stuck there for five hours, and your fantasies turn lethal. Front 242 puts you in the middle of those fantasies, without going to the airport. —C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe and CD Review.

Charles M. Young is a New York-based writer.

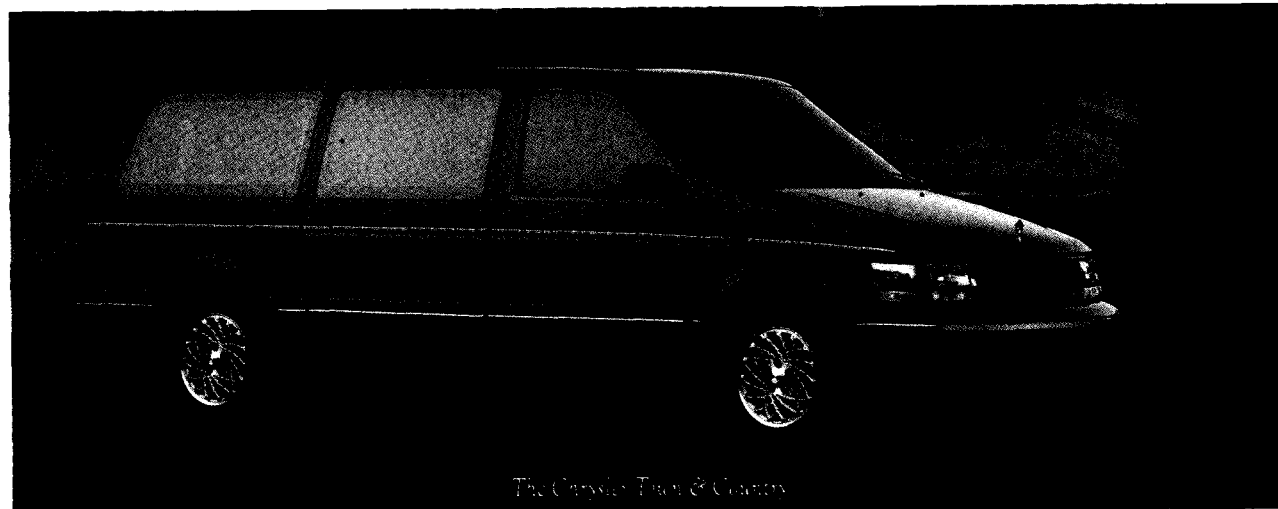


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The Atlantic Monthly

ONLINE



The Atlantic Monthly recently launched an electronic version of itself on America Online, a computer network that allows users to tap into a wide range of interactive services. The Atlantic Monthly Online includes a selection of articles taken directly from the magazine, and also a variety of offerings available only online: features about the magazine's history; profiles of current contributors; a message board for discussing topics raised in Atlantic articles; live electronic conferences with Atlantic editors and experts from various disciplines. Last month, for example, Atlantic senior editor Corby Kummer discussed herbal liqueurs with a live online audience. This month senior editor Barbara Wallraff has started a message folder called "Watch Your Language," wherein she will respond to nettlesome grammar questions.

Participation in America Online requires a computer capable of displaying graphics, a mouse, and a modem. Call America Online, at 1-800-827-6364, extension 7982, to request communications software and a password. New users are entitled to ten hours of free exploration.

(Continued from page 36)

Communist officials—that they could expect a check from the U.S. government for fifteen or more years of military back pay, along with keys to a house and a car. Then there is the breakdown of the family. In the new social milieu even some of the most obedient, hardworking children rebel against the strict Confucian authority of their fathers, and many wives rebel against their husbands. Other children join hard-core Vietnamese gangs, which specialize in well-planned invasions of the houses of other Vietnamese-Americans, who for the most part do not trust their savings to banks. Gangs are not a major concern in Boston or other East Coast cities, but in Little Saigon they are such a problem that the councilman Tony Lam has called for deporting violent gang members to Vietnam.

Especially for those who were locked away in re-education camps, depression and stagnation are also the result of having endured the greatest postwar horrors. "The killing fields of Cambodia were more humane," says Jade Ngoc Huynh, a camp survivor and the author of the forthcoming memoir *South Wind Changing*. "It is merciful to kill fast. In the prison camps they worked us to a slow death." Two months after the fall of Saigon, South Vietnamese military officers, students, and professionals were told to report for ten days to one month of political study. Strangely, no one seemed to suspect that this was a ruse, and hardly anyone resisted. The peasant guards delighted in breaking their urban, once-pampered prisoners through psychological and physical torture, but invariably the form of abuse that former prisoners remember and describe most vividly is starvation. At the daily meal a group of fifty prisoners might be forced to share enough rotten rice to sustain one person. To survive, the prisoners began to eat cockroaches, banana peels, and the cigarette butts discarded by guards.

Normalization will only bring more anguish to the survivors. While the newcomers wait for milestones in the more distant future—the clearing of the Southeast Asian refugee camps, the return of nationalized property, or the demise of the current government—the more successful Vietnamese-Americans will return to Vietnam in droves, to visit parents and other relatives, to provide humanitarian

assistance, and to cash in on the marketable side effects of exile in the West, a process that has already begun. Even those first-wave professionals who now ostensibly oppose normalization will find returning palatable. This conclusion draws support from the recent actions of the other half of the world's overseas Vietnamese: the refugees who settled in Europe, Australia, and Canada. The non-American overseas Vietnamese have not been bound by the U.S. trade embargo and are several steps ahead of their American counterparts in establishing commercial and humanitarian projects in Vietnam.

Most tangibly, diplomatic normalization means that the United States will establish an embassy in Hanoi (reportedly, land has been set aside for that purpose), and the Vietnamese who are naturalized American citizens can expect to receive in Vietnam full legal protection from the U.S. government. For businesspeople, normalization means that U.S. companies will be clamoring for Vietnamese-American consultants to help them negotiate their way through Vietnam's overwhelming bureaucracy and corruption. Vietnamese-American-owned businesses, too, will find it much easier to take advantage of the cheap and relatively skilled labor of Vietnam; now it is technically illegal for any American citizen to trade with Vietnam (though that has not prevented many Vietnamese-Americans from secretly buying large tracts of land around Saigon, or from opening restaurants and hotels, or from running lucrative money-changing businesses). Normalization will also create a huge market for Vietnamese-Americans with professional and technical skills, a fortunate coincidence for the many Vietnamese computer technicians and engineers who have been laid off from high-tech jobs in the United States as a result of recent defense-budget cuts.

Meanwhile, because U.S. refugee-assistance budgets have dwindled, much of the financial responsibility for the newest refugees has shifted to the local Vietnamese communities. The former prisoners, therefore, have become increasingly dependent on the wealthy, established Vietnamese-Americans—precisely those refugees whose hearts and wallets are most likely to be in Vietnam. The former prisoners will survive—but as a leaderless, distrustful mass whose tightest bonds are depression and anger. ☛



An Ottoman Odyssey

A sailboat and the Turkish coast make a magical combination

A COUPLE of years ago I sailed with a group of friends from Naples to Menorca by way of Sardinia and Corsica. Although it was a wonderful trip, we kept hearing, throughout our journey, a haunting refrain: "It's better in Turkey." Turkey, we were told, is a sailor's paradise, having more consistent wind, less pollution, more interesting things to see, better food, and lower prices.

Unable to resist, four members of the original crew recently embarked on a two-week cruise along the western portion of Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The foursome consisted of two Britons—Simon, a BBC news editor, and Stewart, a construction contractor—and two Americans: Harry, a New York investment banker, and me, a writer who generally focuses on international business and economics. We were joined by a newcomer: Ben, another American, who, thanks to a Fulbright grant, had spent the previous year living in Istanbul.

The gang in the Gulf of Fethiye

In spite of our diversity, we share the conviction that no vacation is better than a sailing vacation. Our faith grows out of the premise that holidays should have so many dimensions and satisfactions that the routines of normal life are relegated to the subconscious. We like sailing because it combines the kind of tourism that usually comes about with the help of a car, the water-based recreation that is generally associated with beach houses, the *Big Chill*-like social interaction that typically occurs in rustic cabins, and, of course, sailing itself.

The Turkish yachting season extends all the way from April through October, but we decided on late August, a time that is sometimes uncomfortably warm but that offers the most substantial winds. Several months before we planned to go, we scoured sailing magazines for advertisements from Turkey-based charter operators. After we requested and received several brochures, we selected the company and the boat we wanted, and submitted a "sailing résumé"

to demonstrate that we were competent mariners (most companies ask for either a résumé or references). We agreed to pay \$4,500 for the use of *Top Girl*, a forty-foot sloop. (The price struck all of us as reasonable, considering that the boat would provide our housing and transportation as well as most of our recreation.)

Harry and I began our trip by visiting Ben in Istanbul. Straddling the European and Asian continents, Istanbul is one of the world's most remarkable cities, and Ben, who speaks Turkish with a fluency that startles many natives, was a first-rate guide both in Istanbul and as we traveled, by ferryboat, along the Bosphorus as far north as the Black Sea, visiting as many of the great historic sites as we could. (Actually, Harry and I found that we could rely on English to communicate with many of the younger people we met on the street and a number of shopkeepers.) After four days of explorations Harry, Ben, and I took an hour-long flight to Dalaman, a city in the southwest, and then hired a taxi for the short ride to Göçek, the village where we joined up with *Top Girl* and the rest of the crew.

As fast as we could, we received the obligatory briefing from the charter company's representatives, filled out forms, bought a few provisions, and hoisted our sails. From the very start the attributes that we had heard so much about were in evidence. Carried by a steady breeze, we began to trace a coastline formed out of enormous piles of chalky gray-brown rock. The sheer walls supported varying quantities of pine trees but not a single house. Indeed, the land rose so quickly from the crystalline water that development was probably impossible. Turkey, it seemed, was ours, and our spirits soared.

Just after dusk we joined four other yachts in Cleopatra's Bay, so named because the ruins there are said to include the baths where the legendary beauty immersed herself in moisturizing goat's milk. Within minutes of our arrival a man appeared from a small outdoor restaurant near the shore, calling out to see if we wanted to order dinner. Ben told him what we'd like, and then we took a quick swim and went ashore for the kind of simple, well-prepared meal that would become our staple: a first course of yo-

by G. Bruce Knecht

gurt-based salads, followed by grilled lamb and fish. The air was warm, and we lingered long into the evening.

Sailing through a narrow channel in the Gulf of Fethiye the next morning, we entered an expansive but sheltered body of water that has been a favorite sailing ground for thousands of years. Empowered by a forceful breeze, we began to get a sense of *Top Girl's* capabilities. In choosing a boat to charter, one is always called upon to make a difficult tradeoff between comfort and speed: at one extreme are the sleek racing boats that tend to be as uncomfortable as they are fast and good-looking; at the other are "cruisers," which have every imaginable comfort and convenience but are consequently heavier, slower, and frequently unattractive. *Top Girl* struck the right balance: even with three sleeping cabins; two heads (bathrooms); a galley equipped with two refrigerators, a stove, and two sinks; and a saloon with two additional bunks as well as a table for dining and another one for navigating, it managed to have enviable lines. As we headed toward Gemiler, an island that Ben had visited before and that he said was absolutely covered with Byzantine ruins, we were traveling at a very respectable five knots per hour.

Turkey has been ruled by some of the most powerful empires in history, and the coast we chose to cruise contains ruins from several cultures, including the Hellenic, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman. And although the shortcomings of modern Turkey's infrastructure make it a struggle to get to many archaeological sites by land, most of them are easily reached from the water. Indeed, when we dropped anchor in the strait that separates Gemiler from the mainland, we were only a few feet from what had probably been several small houses in the late Byzantine period, some 900 years ago. After we used our rubber dinghy to ferry ourselves to the island, we began exploring what had obviously been a very wealthy and densely developed community. In addition to houses and at least two churches, we found a colonnaded archway that was so well preserved that

large sections of its curving roof remained in place. We were the only people there.

As we sailed away from Gemiler, I was more optimistic than ever that Turkey was going to meet our lofty expectations, and, equally important, I was confident that we were a compatible crew. Thank goodness. Spending time on a sailboat, obviously a small and confined space, can lead either to lasting friendships or to disastrous frictions. For us, the constant interaction was nearly always positive, and involved a lot of joking.

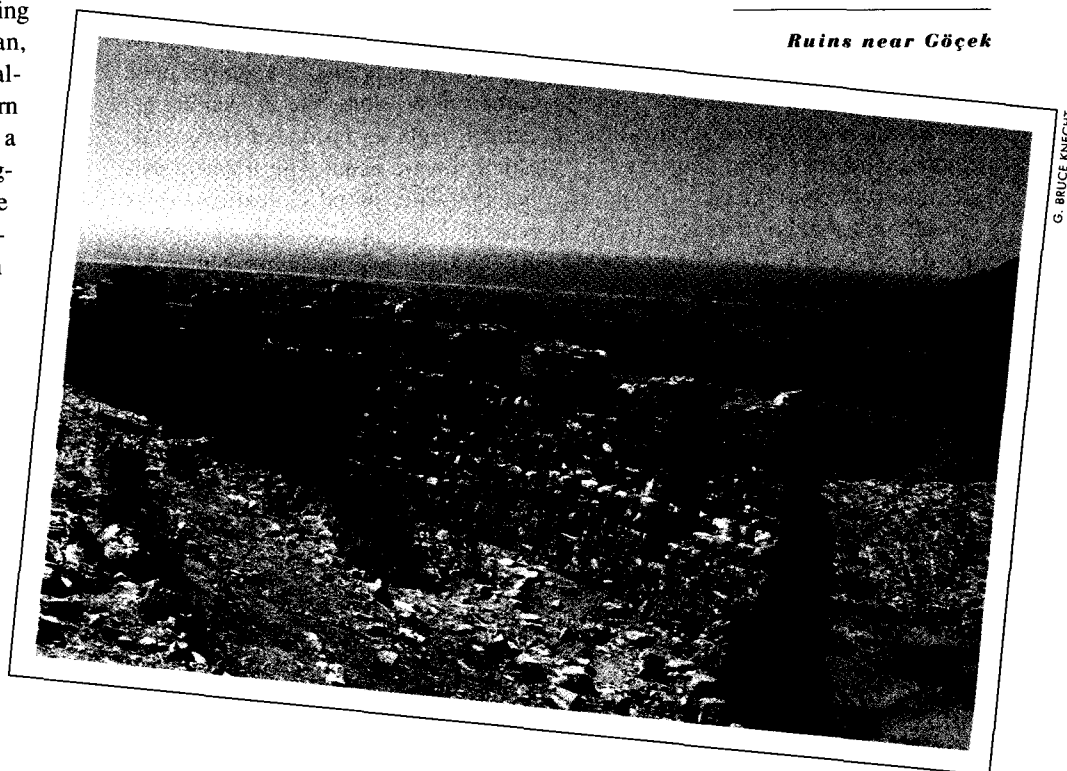
Pursuing a southeasterly heading, we sailed toward Kalkan, and late in the afternoon we joined several yachts and fishing boats in its compact marina. Like many towns in that part of Turkey, Kalkan was long populated by Greeks, and their influence is readily apparent. For example, the mosque that we could see from our berth obviously had been a Greek Orthodox Church until a minaret was added. The Greeks left back in the 1920s, after Turkey and Greece negotiated a treaty that encouraged Turks and Greeks to return to their native countries. This fueled the age-old animosity between Turkey and Greece, which continues today to such an extent that most Turkey-based charter companies forbid their customers to land in Greece. *Top Girl's* owners, however, had told us that Kaştellorizon, a large Greek

island that lies just a few miles from Turkey, was generally free of officials and therefore an acceptable risk.

Making it our next destination, we entered the island's only harbor to see a picture-perfect line of whitewashed houses with multicolored doors and shutters. We soon discovered that the image is as thin as a movie set. The owner of the quayside restaurant where we had dinner told us that the village had been an Italian-ruled fishing community with more than 15,000 inhabitants at the start of the Second World War, but that the Allied forces considered it important enough that they occupied and destroyed almost all of it. The island has never recovered; today it has only about 200 residents. When Simon and I made an early-morning climb to the highest point overlooking the harbor, we saw scores of modern-day ruins, and we even came across the large shell of an unexploded bomb.

From Kaştellorizon we sailed to the nearby Turkish city of Kaş. Resting on a slope situated between a large bay and a line of cliffs, some of them containing Lycian rock tombs that have the façades of temples, the town is known for its Hellenistic theater and also for its nightlife. We therefore visited the theater, taking photographs of it as the sun set behind the cliffs; and after enjoying an elaborate seafood dinner, which, like dinners everywhere we went, cost less than \$10

Ruins near Göçek



G. BRUCE KNEF-AT

per person, we drifted into an outdoor café where two Turkish folk singers were performing. We met a group of Turkish women at the next table, and Simon and I went with them to a rock club where the blaring music showed no signs of abating even as we left, sometime after 3:00 A.M.

IN the routine we developed, most days began slowly. Although Stewart encouraged early risers (mostly me) to delay their use of the creaking stairs that led from the saloon to the cockpit, I generally woke up soon after dawn to make journal entries and to take long swims. By the time I returned to the boat, Stewart had made the coffee—no one else ever did—and Simon had begun to prod us into deciding on the day's overall plan. Because the midday heat could be uncomfortable, we tried to do most of our sightseeing at the start of the day, leaving the middle, when the winds were better anyway, for sailing. By midafternoon we had generally found a place to spend the night; our arrivals were uniformly followed by swimming and snorkeling, freshwater showers, cocktails and pistachios, and, ultimately, dinner and stargazing.

After Kaş we continued on to Kekova Island, the farthest we got from Göçek. During two days there we circumnavigated the five-mile-long island and visited Kaleköy, a hamlet notable for its well-preserved medieval castle and a sprawling hilltop necropolis of large sarcophagi. We also hired a small fishing boat that took us directly over what had been the ancient city of Simena. Built in the fifth century B.C., the city subsequently sank below the water level as a result of one of the calamitous earthquakes that have punctuated Turkey's long history. Peering through the water with the help of a glass-bottomed bucket, we spotted walls, mosaics, and even ceramic jugs.

When we left Kekova Sound to return to the Mediterranean, we discovered a heavy wind of close to thirty knots. For me, there is an elemental thrill in using the wind for leverage and adjusting the angle and shape of the sails to achieve maximum speed. The more wind the better. But although I was eager to use sails to capitalize on the powerful force, the rest of the crew overruled me, deciding that we'd get where we wanted to go faster by using the engine to head closer to the source of the wind. They were

probably right. It was the kind of day that reminds nautical interlopers that open waters, even when they are warm and emerald green, can suddenly turn dangerous. Even though the sky remained a cloudless blue, as it had ever since we left Göçek, the waves that were crashing over the deck made us so cold that we were forced to fashion protective garments out of garbage bags. (All but one of us had brazenly left our foul-weather gear at home.) When Stewart took the helm, he went so far as to use a diving mask to protect his eyes and nose from the onslaught. For the rest of us, shivering in spite of our plastic gowns, the sight of him wrapped up in his big baby-blue plastic sack, gulping down air through his mouth, provided welcome comic relief.

Most sailors have nothing but scorn for powerboats—Americans call them “stink-pots”; Britons call them “gin palaces.” Since this snobbery becomes particularly acute in the midst of difficult conditions, it was ironic that when we escaped the rough seas by entering a sheltered cove, we spotted a large powerboat that was carrying several American friends. It was a “Turkish gulet,” a kind of boat that was designed specifically for charter holidays and that has become increasingly popular in recent years. Boarding the sixty-foot wooden-hulled craft—which had masts although it never used any sail—we could readily see just how different their experience was from ours. While we charted courses and hoisted sails and braved challenging seas, our friends spent their days lounging around a vast deck, waiting for a four-man professional crew to serve meals and move their motel-like craft from place to place. Although there is something to be said for their approach (they were, after all, seeing many of the same places we were, and the magic of sailing is, unaccountably, invisible to some), we were happy not to be a part of it.

Three days later, suddenly the last day of our voyage, we had returned to the Gulf of Fethiye and were enjoying what was probably our single best day of sailing. When I took my last turn at the helm, the wind was constant, at fifteen to twenty knots, the seas were relatively calm, and we were surrounded by the dramatic terrain that continued to astound us. As we hurtled along at an invigorating speed, my faith in the perfection of sailing vacations had never been stronger. ☼

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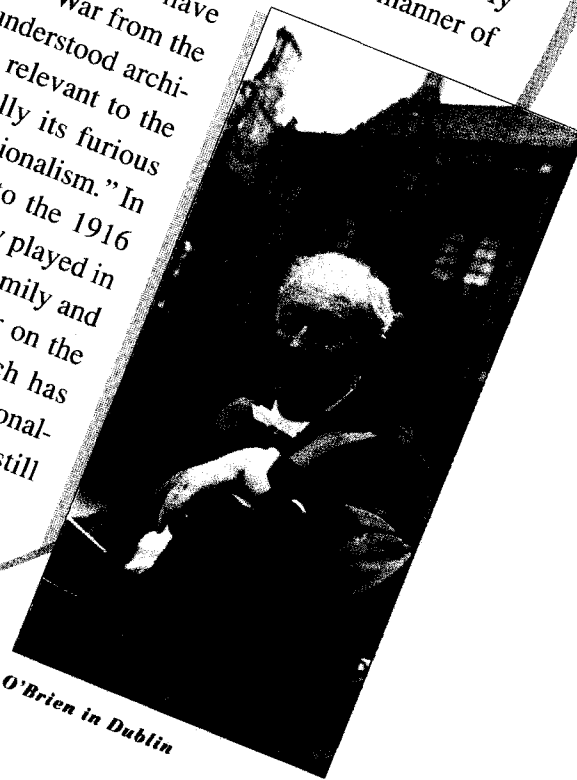
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TWENTIETH-CENTURY WITNESS

SCHOLAR, diplomat, politician, government minister, historian, biographer, anti-war activist, intellectual, playwright, newspaper editor, prose stylist, political theorist, university president, and authority on Zionism, terrorism, Ireland, Africa, post-colonialism, and nationalism: Conor Cruise O'Brien is a man of many parts; his biography, being written by Donald Akenson, a Canadian scholar, will run to more than 800 pages. At seventy-six, O'Brien writes weekly columns for both *The Independent* (Britain) and *The Irish Independent*, regularly reviews books for the *Times Literary Supplement* and *The New York Review of Books*, lectures at leading universities around the world, and has just published a universally acclaimed intellectual biography of Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century statesman and political philosopher. "The Cruiser," as he is familiarly known to British and Irish journalists, is a robust controversialist with a Johnsonian eye for cant, especially of the political variety—the kind often used to justify murder. Yet in person O'Brien is known on several continents for his wit, his generous laugh, and his supremely entertaining conversation. Having been thus regaled and informed on several occasions, the editors of *The Atlantic Monthly* asked O'Brien, a contributing editor of the magazine since 1985, to share the extraordinary story of his life as a prism through which to view his times. In the manner of a word about O'Brien uses his life as a prism through which to view his times. In the manner of George F. Kennan in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Memoirs*, he is concerned with understanding those currents of twentieth-century history that have swirled around him. Where Kennan told the story of the Cold War from the point of view of one of its most discerning and most misunderstood architects, O'Brien is a witness to a current of history newly relevant to the post-Cold War world—that of nationalism, and especially its furious amalgam with religion in the force he has called "sacral nationalism." In this first offering, for example, O'Brien takes us back to the 1916 "Easter Rising" in Dublin to trace the tragic part his family played in that violent episode. Beneath this dramatic portrait of a family and a people sundered by politics, however, O'Brien is ever on the hunt for the lethal mixing of God with country which has spilled oceans of blood throughout this century of nationalism and which, from Bosnia to Northern Ireland, still curses the world.

We are pleased to present scenes from one of the noteworthy lives of the century.



O'Brien in Dublin

Ireland's Fissures, and My Family's

by CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

THE first sound I can remember is a series of booming noises, which woke me up. The cause of the noises was the bombardment of the Four Courts, Dublin, beginning at 4:07 A.M. on Wednesday, June 28, 1922. I was then four and a half years old. That bombardment is generally considered to be the beginning of the Irish Civil War, which lasted throughout the remainder of my fifth year and into my sixth.

The background to the bombardment, and the political and military setting of my early life, need to be told, if the reader is to understand the rest of the story. These were as follows:

Up to December of 1918 all Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom, along with Great Britain. Representatives freely chosen by all the Irish constituencies sat in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. My maternal grandfather, David Sheehy, was one of these representatives. He had started his active career as an organizer for the Irish Land League, the great agrarian combination that shattered the power of the Irish landlords in the 1880s. In consequence he was elected to Westminster as a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and sat there from 1885 to 1918. The policy of the IPP was to induce Britain, through parliamentary pressure, to grant Home Rule to Ireland. Home Rule did not mean independence; it meant autonomy within the British Empire, a goal then generally accepted by most Irish people.

The goal seemed about to be achieved when, on May 9, 1912, the Third Home Rule Bill was carried in the House of Commons, an event that in the next two years was to take the whole of the United Kingdom to the verge of civil war. The Protestants of eastern Ulster—what is now Northern

Ireland—pledged themselves to resist incorporation in a Home Rule Ireland, and armed themselves in proof of their determination to resist.

It soon became clear that eastern Ulster could not be included in Home Rule Ireland unless the British forced it in.

The British government did not see how that could be done, and had no inclination to try to find out. So it would be Home Rule with Partition: the nationalists (Catholics) could have Home Rule, which was what they wanted; the unionists (Protestants) could stay in the United Kingdom, since that was what *they* wanted. In retrospect this settlement, in its general character (though not in the precise form it was to take, in 1920), seems to me sound: respectful of the realities on the ground, and of the principle of the consent of the governed.

That, however, was very much *not* how it appeared to nationalists at the time (or since). Nationalists of every shade regarded Partition as a betrayal, a capitulation to naked force. It never occurred to any nationalist that the determination of a million Ulster Protestants to stay in the United Kingdom represented any kind of moral force whatever. Symmetrically, no unionist ever conceded that the desire of three million nationalists for Home Rule had any moral force whatever. In any case, each community had a low opinion of the general morals of the other, so the idea of the other as representing any kind of moral force was too outlandish to be entertained.

We can observe in many contexts that people bent on seceding from an established political entity are always outraged when someone else tries to secede from the political entity they are bent on establishing. We see this today in various parts of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. It was strongly manifest in Ireland on the eve of the First World War. Nationalists held that they had a right to secede from the United Kingdom but that unionists did not have the right to secede from the entity the nationalists themselves sought to create: Home Rule Ireland.

Among those who held these opinions were my father and mother: nationalists of the mildest and most tolerant description and, of course, *constitutional* nationalists, as opposed to

*T*HE ENORMOUS
CHASM THAT HAD
OPENED IN THE HEART OF
EUROPE IN THE LATE
SUMMER OF 1914 SPLIT
PEOPLE IN EVERY
COUNTRY.



Kathleen Cruise O'Brien;
Francis Cruise O'Brien



COURTESY OF ANDRÉE SHEEHY-SKEFFINGTON; OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY OF THE CRUISE O'BRIEN FAMILY

The Sheehy family circa 1895. Front row: the author's mother, Kathleen, and grandmother Bessie. Middle row: his great-uncle Father Eugene, aunt Hanna, grandfather David, aunt Margaret, and aunt Mary. Back row: his uncles Eugene and Richard

physical-force nationalists. Most Irish nationalists were constitutional before the First World War. My mother, born Kathleen Sheehy, was a teacher of Irish in a technical school; she is the original of Miss Ivors, the Gaelic-language enthusiast, in James Joyce's story *The Dead*. My father, Francis Cruise O'Brien, was a journalist on two moderate nationalist newspapers: *The Freeman's Journal* and later *The Irish Independent*. He was an agnostic, and had produced an edition of W.E.H. Lecky's history of the rise of rationalism in Europe. He had also written a tract intended to refute the unionist contention that "Home Rule means Rome Rule." Home Rule Ireland would, he thought, be quite a tolerant and secular sort of place. He was to find out, in the early years of the new state, that the "Rome Rule" gibe had a lot more substance to it than he had bargained for.

As a boy, of course, and also as a young man, I accepted my parents' interpretation of the Home Rule crisis of 1912–1914. I can no longer accept that, but I respect my parents'

feelings about those transactions, quite independent of the validity of their interpretation of them. There could be no mistaking, in their faces and their voices, the depth of the personal anguish they both experienced as they contemplated that turning point in the history of Ireland (and of the United Kingdom).

The Return of the Gun

THE source of the anguish was not the "loss" of eastern Ulster—not by any means. Few Catholics and nationalists in what is now the Republic of Ireland have ever cared all that much about what is now Northern Ireland, and my parents were no exception. The source of the anguish was the impact on *us*, inside the Catholic and nationalist community (of what is now the Republic), of the tragic and unexpected flaw that became apparent at the very moment of the seeming triumph of the Home Rule cause. The



Above: Patrick Pearse, a leader of the Easter Rising
Below: Irish Volunteers

Partition of Ireland compromised the constitutional nationalists in the eyes of their own constituents. And the fact that Partition had been conceded only after a show of force by unionists was seen, by an increasingly influential group, as legitimizing recourse to force on the nationalist side. The creation and arming of the Irish Volunteers (Catholic nationalists) followed on the creation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (Protestant unionists).

Moderate nationalists and extreme ones interpreted the

sequence of transactions in much the same way. As my father put it, speaking of Ulster Protestants and unionists, "The Orangemen brought the gun back into Irish politics." Patrick Pearse, who was to provide the inspiration for the Easter Rising of 1916 (to which I shall come in a moment), put this thought with a significant difference, but the principle is the same. Pearse was replying to certain nationalists who were jeering at the Ulster Volunteers for their military posturing. Pearse said, "I think the Orangeman with the rifle a much less ridiculous figure than the Nationalist without a rifle."

As I say, I share, or rather inherit, my parents' feelings about the transactions of 1912–1914 (as distinct from their intellectual interpretation of the source of their grief). I am their son, after all, and my grandfather's grandson. I have what Irish Republicans (extreme nationalists) used to call "the bad parliamentary drop." The "drop" there is a drop of blood, meaning that Republicans detected, in the families of

members of the old Irish Parliamentary Party, a genetically transmitted inclination to be pro-British. They had a point, of sorts. The members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, including my grandfather, *were* pro-British by comparison with the Brit-hating Republican tradition, from the Fenians to the modern IRA, and I, too, am pro-British, in the same sense. When I listen to such Republicans going on about the Brits, and quite often about me personally, I comfort myself by recalling the neat verdict on such as these pronounced by an unidentified wit: "He has a mind like an unripe gooseberry—small, bitter, fuzzy, and green."

When my father said that "the Orangemen brought the gun back into Irish politics," he was omitting the nationalist contribution. It was the nationalist insistence on including the Orangemen in a united Ireland *against their known and fervently declared wishes* that made the Orangemen "bring back the gun." But no nationalist, however constitutional, could ever manage to see it that way. I see it that way *now* because I have ceased to be an Irish nationalist.

When Imperial Germany's invasion of Belgium precipitated the entry of the United Kingdom into the First World War, the Irish Parliamentary Party, in the House of Commons, declared its support for the war effort. This might seem surprising in view of what nationalists generally regarded as a betrayal over Partition. But most Irish Catholics still wanted Home Rule, even without eastern Ulster. There was at that time general (if grudging) acceptance in Ireland of the Irish Parliamentary Party's position, and Irish Catholics joined the armed forces in large numbers. Among those who did so were my mother's two brothers, Richard and Eugene Sheehy, and also Tom Kettle, the husband of my mother's sister Mary. (Mary, who was a great beauty, had been secretly admired by James Joyce, but didn't take him seriously. Tom was an MP, handsome and charming, and "brilliant" in more-obvious ways than Joyce was.) My father was in favor of the war effort but not fit to serve; no recruit-



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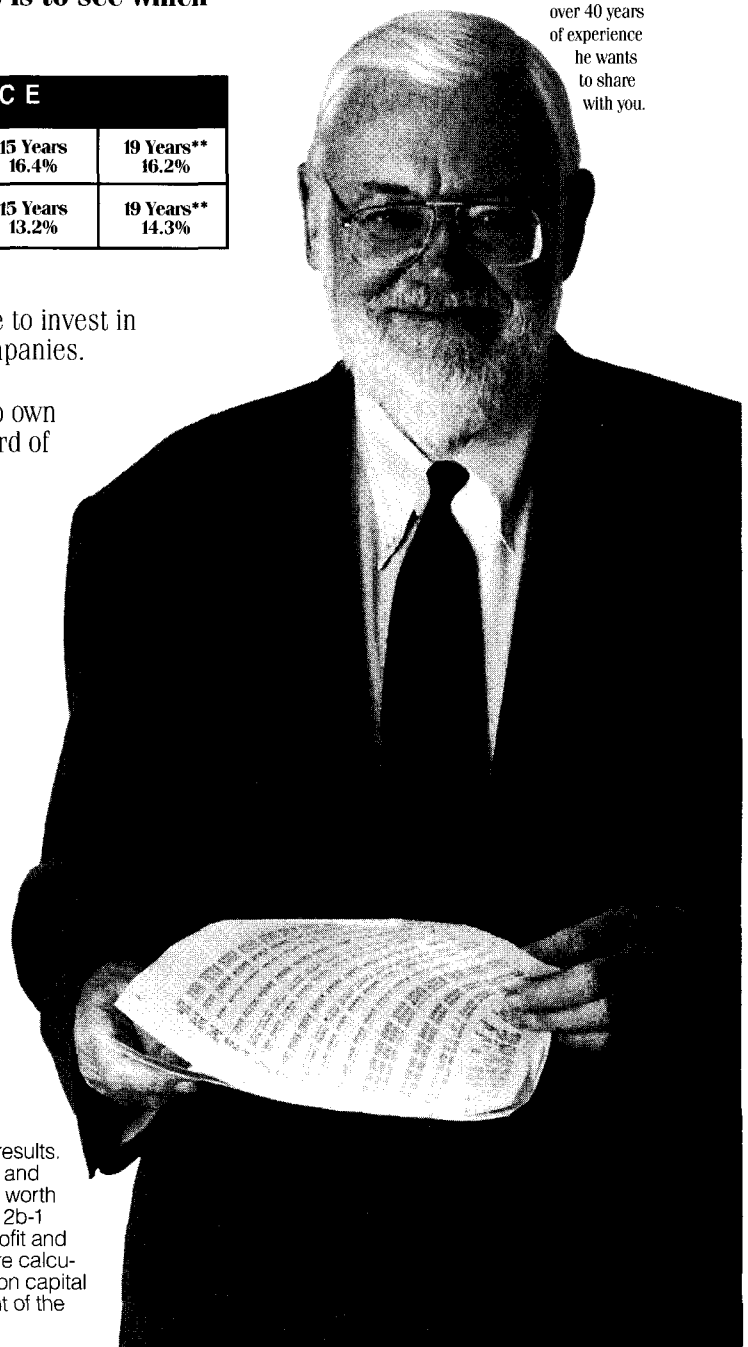
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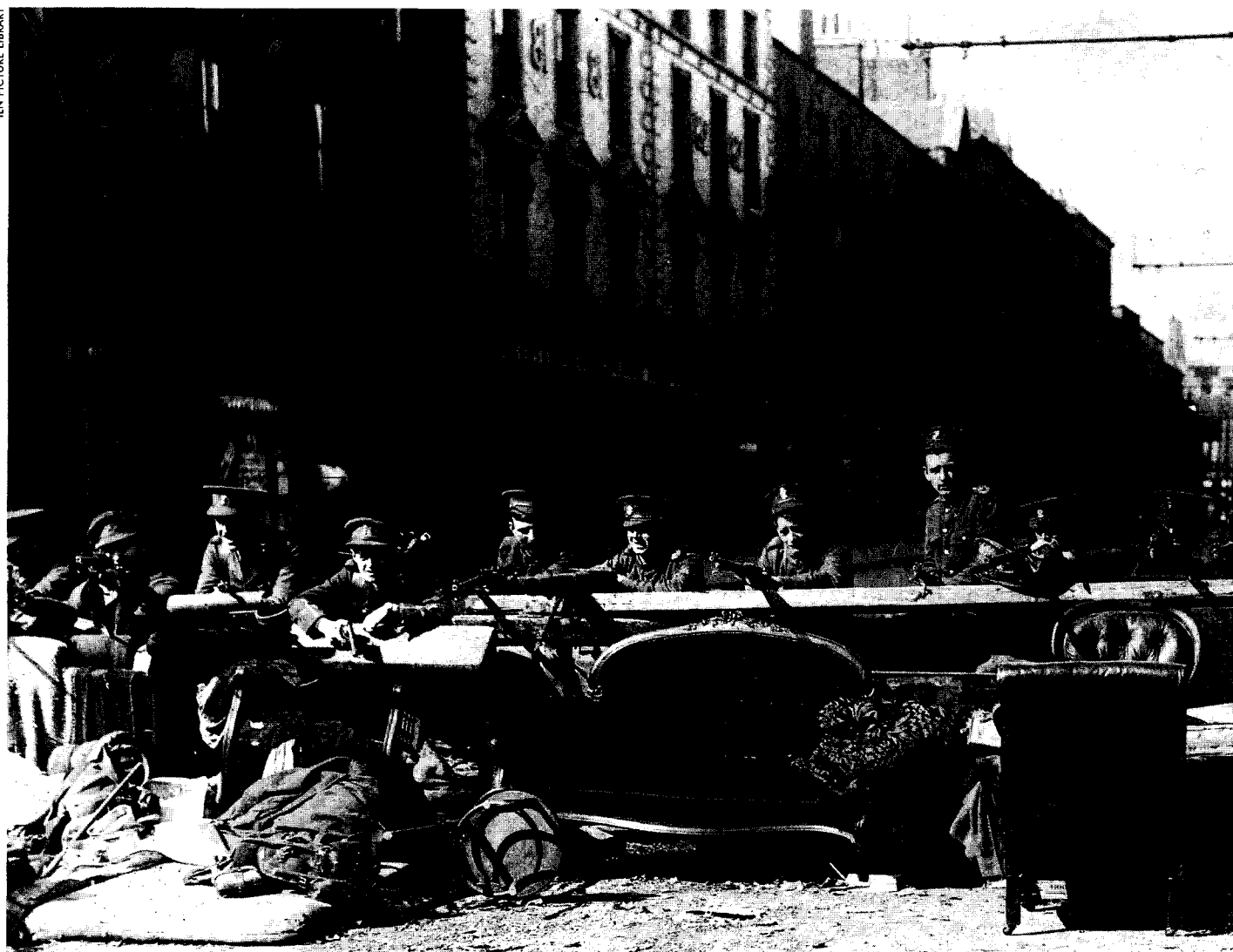
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ing sergeant would have looked at him twice. He had been a premature child and was small and thin to the verge of emaciation. But he was high-spirited and verbally aggressive, with a neat turn of phrase. He wanted to make recruiting speeches, but my mother put her foot down. She said that someone who could not fight on his own account should not go around telling other people it was their duty to fight. Fair enough—but I think there was more to it than that.

My mother was the youngest of the six Sheehy siblings. The eldest, and much the most forceful personality, was Hanna. Hanna was married to Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. Both Hanna and Frank were feminists (hence the hyphenated name), socialists, and pacifists. They were against the war effort, formally on socialist and pacifist grounds (with possibly a dash of feminism as well). But again, I think there was more to it than that. Frank was very close, especially from 1914 to 1916, to James Connolly, who was to be joint leader, with Patrick Pearse, of the Easter Rising in Dublin. Connolly

ly was the leading socialist in Ireland, and the initial bond between the two men was their common commitment to socialism. But from the outbreak of the First World War until his death in 1916, Connolly's real and passionate commitment was to revolutionary nationalism. As a recent biographer, Austen Morgan, says, "In August 1914 Connolly became a revolutionary nationalist." Skeffington went a long way, though not all the way, with Connolly in that direction. His pacifism had been subject to deviation even before the war. In March of 1914 his name appeared on a list of the members of the "army council" of the Irish Citizen Army. He dropped out shortly afterward; he was clearly torn by conflicting feelings. In May of 1915 he wrote an "Open Letter to Thomas McDonagh," reproaching him for having "boasted of being one of the creators of a new militarism in Ireland." McDonagh—who, like Connolly, was executed for his share in the Easter Rising—was, in the terms of the rhetoric still habitual to Connolly and Skeffington (though it



was increasingly perfunctory in Connolly's case), a "bourgeois nationalist," which perhaps made his militarism more conspicuous than that of the socialist Connolly. Skeffington never addressed any such rebuke, or any known rebuke, to Connolly, whose *Workers' Republic* was becoming increasingly violent in its revolutionary nationalism at about the same time that Skeffington admonished McDonagh about militarism.

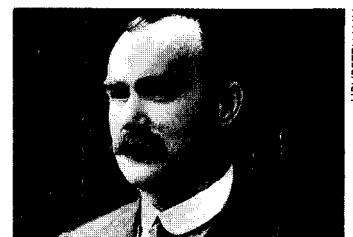
Nine days after his open letter Skeffington was arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for his public attacks on British militarism. With characteristic courage and determination he went immediately on a hunger—and then a thirst—strike. Seeing that he was clearly prepared to die if not released, the British set him free after seven days. They were sufficiently unnerved to allow him to proceed to the neutral United States on a lecture tour, although the object of his journey was quite clearly to engage in propaganda against American support for the Allied cause. After his re-

turn to Ireland, Skeffington "reported his impressions of the new world" at a meeting chaired by Connolly. When a speaker proclaimed, according to the *Workers' Republic*, that she "did not want the war stopped until the British Empire was smashed," Skeffington countered by proposing a debate on "peace now." Yet the bloodthirsty speaker—Constance Markievicz, later sentenced to death (but not executed) for her share in the Easter Rising—was expressing Connolly's view. In the following month (on February 18, 1916) Markievicz, ably supported by Connolly, won the support of a Dublin meeting for the motion that Ireland could only benefit from a prolonged war. Skeffington was still a pacifist, but his loyalty to Connolly does not seem to have been shaken by Connolly's adoption of this extravagantly nationalist and militaristic position. Skeffington continued to write for Connolly's *Workers' Republic*, at a time (March and April of 1916) when that paper was clearly on an insurrectionary course. And Skeffington retained Connolly's confidence to the end. Connolly had nominated Skeffington as his literary executor; he would not have taken this step had he not known that Skeffington, despite his pacifist scruples, was in full ideological sympathy with him. It seems that Skeffington's pacifism by this time had become limited to a personal determination not to commit any act of violence. But he risked his own life, in a nonviolent way, and lost it. Connolly, until the eve of his execution, did not know that his literary executor was already dead: shot by British troops in the course of the rising that Connolly and his friends had started. I shall come back to that.

Between King and Kaiser

THE wartime conversion of pacifist (or near-pacifist) socialists into nationalists was a universal European phenomenon in 1914. But it generally involved support for the war effort. In Ireland, since Irish nationalism (in its intense forms) is anti-British, aroused nationalism took the form first of opposition to the British war effort and then, in 1916, of contributing to the war effort of the Central Powers.

At the beginning of the war Connolly had ostensibly been neutral. Across the front of his union's headquarters, at Liberty Hall in Dublin, was a banner reading WE SERVE NEITHER KING NOR KAISER BUT IRELAND. But as the war went on, the causes of the Kaiser and Ireland began to coalesce. In October of 1915 the *Work-*



At left: Dublin, 1916
Above: Constance Markievicz; James Connolly

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ers' Republic identified Imperial Germany as (according to Austen Morgan) "a nation resisting dependency." By December of the same year the message was clearer and louder. Constance Markievicz presented a marching song to Connolly's Irish Citizen Army: "The Germans Are Winning the War, Me Boys." By January of 1916 Connolly had joined the military council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, an organization that, although it had nothing socialist about it, was preparing for an insurrection, for which it sought aid from Imperial Germany. The Proclamation of the Republic, in Easter Week of 1916, referred to Ireland as supported "by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe." In the minds of the more politically sophisticated planners of the rising, that event was to provide credentials for admission to the eventual peace conference, which was of course expected to be dominated by the Central Powers. At least two of those planners, including Pearse, intended that at that peace conference the Crown of Ireland should be offered to a German prince, a member of a Roman Catholic branch of the house of Hohenzollern. The authors of that project were two of the seven signatories, along with James Connolly, of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

All this was very far from the intellectual world normally inhabited by Francis and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. But they were now near to it emotionally, through their association with James Connolly—an association not diminished by Connolly's mutation from a socialist into a revolutionary nationalist. Paradoxically, it was Frank's pacifism, even more than his socialism, that commended him to Connolly at this time. In theory pacifism was universal: opposed to all war efforts everywhere. In practice each pacifist lived in a particular country, and the activity of any particular pacifist damaged one particular war effort, and so benefited another one. An Irish pacifist impeded the British war effort, mainly by slowing up recruiting. Most Irish opponents of the British war effort were not pacifists; they were extreme nationalists. But the nationalists had a warm welcome for Irish pacifists, whom they saw as valuable allies, adding a humanitarian and cosmopolitan touch to the common cause. In those years pacifists were not welcome in the houses of most constitutional nationalists, who were committed to the war effort. The Sheehy-Skeffingtons kept up connections with their relatives "on the other side," but the conversation must have been restricted to items of family interest. Very few other pacifists were around, and those that were must have been worried about the Sheehy-Skeffingtons, especially when Frank's name appeared—however briefly—on the list of members of the army council

of the Irish Citizen Army. Unionists hated pacifists, and in any case unionists and nationalists—of whatever description—did not mingle socially. So the only circle where the Sheehy-Skeffingtons were really welcome, having a sense of being on the same side on the things that mattered, was that of the extreme nationalists. It is not surprising that they should have taken something of the tone and mind-set of the circle in which they were welcome. Just as exalted nationalism came to replace socialism in the case of James Connolly, so exalted nationalism came to replace both socialism and pacifism in the case of the Sheehy-Skeffingtons. In both cases something of the old vocabulary remained, but the uses to which it was put, and the feelings underlying it, had greatly changed.

The enormous chasm that had opened in the heart of Europe in the late summer of 1914 sent fissures, both large and small, first through the rest of Europe and then throughout the world, splitting people in every country. One tiny fissure of a fissure ran through our family, dividing supporters of the Allies from opponents of the Allied cause, who were thereby supporters of the Central Powers, objectively speaking.

The pro-Allies section was much the larger. My three uncles, Richard and Eugene Sheehy and Tom Kettle, were in British uniform. The other pro-Allies people were my grandfather, David Sheehy; my father; and my aunt Mary, Tom's wife. (My mother, as we shall see, rather straddled the divide.)

There were just two anti-Allies people: Frank and Hanna. But they were a formidable pair, and thoroughly convinced of the justice of their cause, although they were probably not conscious of how much that cause had changed since the outbreak of the war.

A Family Split by Politics

THE constitutional nationalists never felt particularly comfortable with *their* cause: support for the British war effort. That went a bit against the grain for Irish nationalists of *any* description. My father, for example, had been quite an advanced nationalist before the war. He had been lowered by a party of other advanced nationalists onto the organ at a conferring ceremony of the National University of Ireland, to prevent the playing of "God Save the King." (This had been far too advanced for my grandfather, because the Irish Parliamentary Party, hoping to achieve Home Rule through the support of the British Liberal Party, was opposed to gestures tending to alienate all sections of British opinion.) In wartime, gestures like that descent on the organ were the exclusive preserve of Frank and Hanna's friends,

MY FATHER
HAD THE GIFT—TRA-
DITIONALLY ESTEEMED AND
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the extreme nationalists. My father and grandfather were now allied in condemning all such gestures for the duration of the war. But my father must have been a little ill at ease in his newfound respectability, and my mother would have sensed this, and worked on it.

My mother, through my father's known position, appeared as belonging to the "constitutional" camp, and did not challenge that position. But she kept on close and friendly terms with the Sheehy-Skeffingtons. I used to be a bit puzzled at my mother's firmness in getting my father to drop his recruiting project. This seemed a bit out of character. In my experience as a boy, my mother always seemed to take her lead from my father. She was known as the nicest of the Sheehys, in favorable contrast to her formidable sisters, Hanna and Mary.

So I was a bit puzzled at the firmness. I ought not to have been, for I would not have come into existence without that underlying firmness. When my mother fell in love with my father, in the first decade of the century, her parents forbade her to marry him, for reasons that seemed obvious to them. My father had no money and poor prospects, was clearly in poor health, spoke with an unsuitably grand accent, and—to cap it all—claimed to be a more advanced nationalist than my grandfather. So David and Bessie put their feet down. My mother was looked on by her parents as the most loving and biddable of all the children, so she was expected to obey without question. Instead she defied her parents. They were strongly backed by my mother's brothers, Richard and Eugene, by her sister Mary, and by Tom Kettle. Of all my mother's siblings, only Hanna supported her marriage. Hanna was strongly supported by Frank.

It was a passionate and lacerating debate, and Frank's determination swung it. On one occasion, at my grandparents' home at 2 Belvedere Place, Dublin, Frank addressed my grandparents about their arrogant unkindness to their youngest daughter. Richard Sheehy, who was present, became outraged at Frank's disrespect to his father and mother. Frank, like my father, was a small man, while Richard was hefty, and a rugby player. Richard picked Frank up bodily, carried him to the front door, threw him down the front steps into the street, and slammed the door. Frank picked himself up, went back up the steps, and knocked on the door. Richard opened it. Frank said, "Force solves nothing, Dick," walked past him into the house, and resumed the dialogue that Richard had interrupted. This seems to have been the decisive moment that unnerved the Sheehys. At any rate they gave in, and my existence followed.

My mother once said to me, "I give in on all the little things, but if a big one comes, I don't." I can now see, in distant retrospect, why the recruiting issue was one on which she had to make a stand. My mother's reasons were personal, not political. The Sheehy-Skeffingtons had been against the war from the beginning; Frank was soon to be engaging in anti-recruiting activities (which were to cost him his life).

If my father were simultaneously engaging in *pro*-recruiting activities, he and Frank would be on a collision course. It would have been a nasty collision. Frank was a pugnacious pacifist, and my father had the gift—traditionally esteemed and feared in Ireland—of saying wounding things in a memorable manner. And a collision between Frank and my father would have meant a collision also between Hanna and my mother. For my mother this was an unbearable prospect. She loved and admired Hanna, and was deeply grateful, all her life, to both the Sheehy-Skeffingtons for the support they had given her at her moment of trial. So she induced my father to keep his opinions about the war to himself. In the light of later developments in Ireland in the course of that war, he must have been glad that he had done so.

The Easter Rising

THE year before I was born, 1916, is remembered in European history (and also in Northern Ireland) as the year of the Battle of the Somme. In Ireland it is remembered as the year of the Easter Rising. There is something paradoxical about this, since Irishmen were killed in vastly greater numbers on the Somme than in Dublin during and after the rising. But those killed because of the rising—and especially the sixteen leaders executed after it—have about them, in retrospect, an aura of sacral and sacrificial nationalism, while those who were killed in the Somme came to be seen, in the version of nationalism that became official in Catholic Ireland in 1918, as having thrown their lives away for no good reason.

Two members of my family were killed that year: Francis Skeffington in the course of the Easter Rising, and Tom Kettle on the Somme, in the following September.

At the beginning of the rising many shop windows in Dublin's main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street, were shattered by the firing. Inevitably Dublin's poor (and probably a few others as well) started helping themselves. Frank Skeffington went downtown to try to stop the looting. In my youth I used to wonder why a socialist should be so anxious to stop the poor from benefiting. A socialist would not *approve*, of course, but why feel the urge to be a volunteer policeman?

Having pondered the relationship between Connolly and Skeffington, I now think that the role of looting stopper was one assigned to Skeffington, probably implicitly rather than explicitly, by Connolly. The proclamation issued by the 1916 leaders, including Connolly, shows them to have been worried lest their cause be dishonored by "cowardice, inhumanity or rapine." Looting was rapine. Patrick Pearse's second communiqué issued during the Easter Rising contained a specific reference linking the question of looting to the question of honor: "Such looting as has already occurred has been done by hangers-on of the British Army. Ireland must keep her new honour unsmirched." Connolly must have known that looters would emerge when windows got broken



and the police were off the streets. Connolly would have seen the looters as not only dishonoring the cause in general but also specifically dishonoring the working-class contribution to the cause, including his own contribution. The task of stopping the looting was a suitable one to assign (or leave) to a pacifist. Skeffington, who was committed to Connolly's cause but not to serving it in Connolly's way, must have been glad and proud to be allowed by Connolly to serve it in his own way. Connolly and Skeffington were drawn to their deaths by a common passionate commitment to the nation and its honor. As Marxists they were supposed to despise "the nation" as a bourgeois idea and "honor" as a feudal one. But their ideology did not govern their feelings.

Frank and Hanna both knew that Connolly and Pearse were headed toward insurrection, and their feelings on the subject diverged somewhat, Hanna's being perhaps somewhat more militant: "I think Connolly was right to go on once they got so far," she wrote to her son, Owen, many years later. She added that her husband "thought otherwise, feeling that any rising was foredoomed."

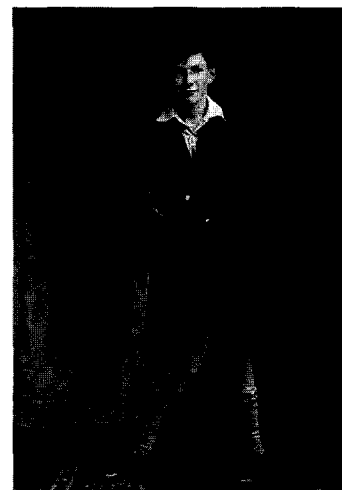
On Easter Monday, 1916, the day the rising broke out, Frank Skeffington set out for the General Post Office, in O'Connell Street, Dublin, where he knew the rebels had established their headquarters. The police had abandoned O'Connell Street, and looters were everywhere, smashing shop windows and helping themselves. At the GPO, Skeffington reported on the looting to Connolly, who refused to intervene. Connolly sent Hanna off with food and dispatches to another rebel garrison, the College of Surgeons, in St. Stephen's Green. On the following day, Tuesday, Skeffington was back in O'Connell Street, trying to organize a citizens' defense force to stop the looting.

It was of course very dangerous for *any* civilian to venture out in O'Connell Street, which was the main center of hostilities during the Easter Rising. But it was especially dangerous for Frank Skeffington. He was unfavorably known to



the British military in Dublin, both for his anti-recruiting activities and for his association with the rebel leader James Connolly. And he was a conspicuous figure, bearded and wearing knickerbockers—in both respects like a miniature version of George Bernard Shaw.

Frank was picked up by a British patrol headed by Captain Bowen-Colthurst and taken to Portobello Barracks. (I tell this story in the form I remember hearing it from my mother.) On the way the patrol encountered a young civilian, whose name was Coade. Coade was carrying rosary beads in his hand. The sight of them infuriated Colthurst, who was a Protestant fundamentalist (and later found to be of unsound mind). He asked Coade what he was doing. Coade replied, "I'm coming from my devotions, sir." (Rathmines Catholic Church is near Portobello Barracks.) Roaring "Take that for your devotions!" Colthurst struck Coade on the head with the butt of his revolver, killing him instantly. Skeffington said, "I'll see you pay for this, Colthurst." Colthurst left Skeffington under guard at Portobello Barracks with instructions that he was to be executed if there was any further rebel firing. Pursuant to Colthurst's instructions, and as the rebel firing continued, Frank was shot by a firing squad in Portobello on Wednesday morning. All through Thursday, Hanna could learn nothing about what had happened to her husband, or where he was. Leah Levenson and Jerry H. Natterstad, the authors of her biography, *Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Irish Feminist* (1986), wrote,



Clockwise from top left: Frank Skeffington; Tom Kettle; the author as a boy

On Friday morning Hanna's sisters, Margaret Culhane and Mary Kettle, decided to go to Portobello Barracks to see if they could obtain any information about Francis. There they talked with a Captain Bowen-Colthurst, who denied any knowledge of their brother-in-law. Puzzled by the vehemence of his denial, they nevertheless accepted his story since they had no intimation then that a murder had even been committed, let alone that he was the one who had ordered it.

On the evening of the same day a British patrol led by Bowen-Colthurst raided the Skeffington home in quest of treasonable material. Hanna was at home, knowing of Frank's arrest but not of his murder. Her son, Owen, then aged seven, was with her. The raiders were noisy, brutal, and destructive, as raiders usually are. Owen started crying. Hanna said, in a cool, clear voice: "Don't worry. These are the defenders of women and children."

Shortly after Frank's murder Tom Kettle came home to Dublin on leave. When his daughter Betty (who had been staying with her aunt Hanna) saw him, she took fright at the sight of the uniform and ran away. Tom was distraught and considered resigning his commission, but decided to volunteer for active service. He was killed at Givenchy, Somme, five months after his brother-in-law had been murdered by soldiers of the army in which he was serving.

The circumstances of the Skeffington murder were embarrassing for the British government, then a Liberal one, headed by H. H. Asquith. Hanna was pressing for a public inquiry. In July she went to London to see Asquith about this. He offered her a large sum of money in compensation, and offered to pay for the education of her son at a first-rate school. The implicit proviso was that she drop her demand for the inquiry. Hanna refused. Asquith asked whether she had considered that her son might later reproach her for that decision. Hanna replied, "If my son were to grow up into a person who could reproach me for that, I would care nothing for anything he might say." Owen did not grow up into such a person.

The Passion of Frank Skeffington

I MUST have been about seven years old myself when I first heard, from my mother, the story of the deaths of Frank Skeffington and Tom Kettle. That would have been in 1924, in the immediate aftermath of the Irish Civil War. My mother told the story very carefully and deliberately. She strove for balance between Frank and Tom. Both

were brave men doing their duty as they saw it, although they saw it in different ways. That much was obviously true. But the story itself—both as my mother told it to me and in its wider context, as I learned about it later—didn't make for balance. It strongly suggested that Frank had been right, and Tom wrong, in relation to the war effort. The Irish Parliamentary Party, which included Tom Kettle as well as my grandfather, had supported the war effort from the first day—a decision that was warmly welcomed in Parliament on that day and totally taken for granted thereafter. Regarding the most important event that occurred in Ireland—the Easter Rising—the passionately urged pleas of the party first to avert, and then to stop, the executions of the leaders of the rising went unheeded. Catholic and nationalist Ireland felt

outraged by the executions. But the ones who felt most outraged were the constitutional nationalists, because they were the ones who had been let down and made fools of. Tom Kettle's personal outrage at the executions—a feeling shared by all Irish Catholics in British uniform at that time—was vastly magnified by the murder of his brother-in-law and, most poignantly, by the spectacle of his daughter Betty running away from the sight of his uniform. A disappointed, disillusioned man, Tom Kettle died for a cause he no longer believed in. And his widow's bereavement was further darkened by her knowledge of that ultimate disillusion. Frank Skeffington was to be vindicated by the same events that disillusioned his brother-in-law. He had been opposed to the war effort from the very beginning, and the events of 1916 in Dublin seem to have shown him to have been right.

As my mother told the story, both men had laid down their lives for Ireland, and I should revere the memories of both of them. All the same, there was a difference. Tom's course was honorable but mistaken, and he had come to know this. He had indeed fought for Ireland, as he believed, and he fully expected to die for it. But when he was facing death, it was in the bitter knowledge that it was not, after all, death for Ireland. Frank, on the other hand, had been clear-sighted in his course throughout.

In my adolescence, brooding over the parallel lives of Tom and Frank (and I have brooded over them at intervals throughout my life), I couldn't see why my mother seemed so sure that Frank had died for Ireland. Socialism and pacifism were his causes, and the occasion of his death. I couldn't see the link between the causes and the occasion, or between either and Ireland. It all seemed pretty incoherent. It doesn't seem that way any longer. As indicated earlier, socialism and pacifism had become recessive for Skeffington. What had become dominant was the exalted nationalism of

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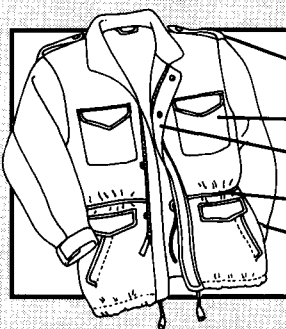
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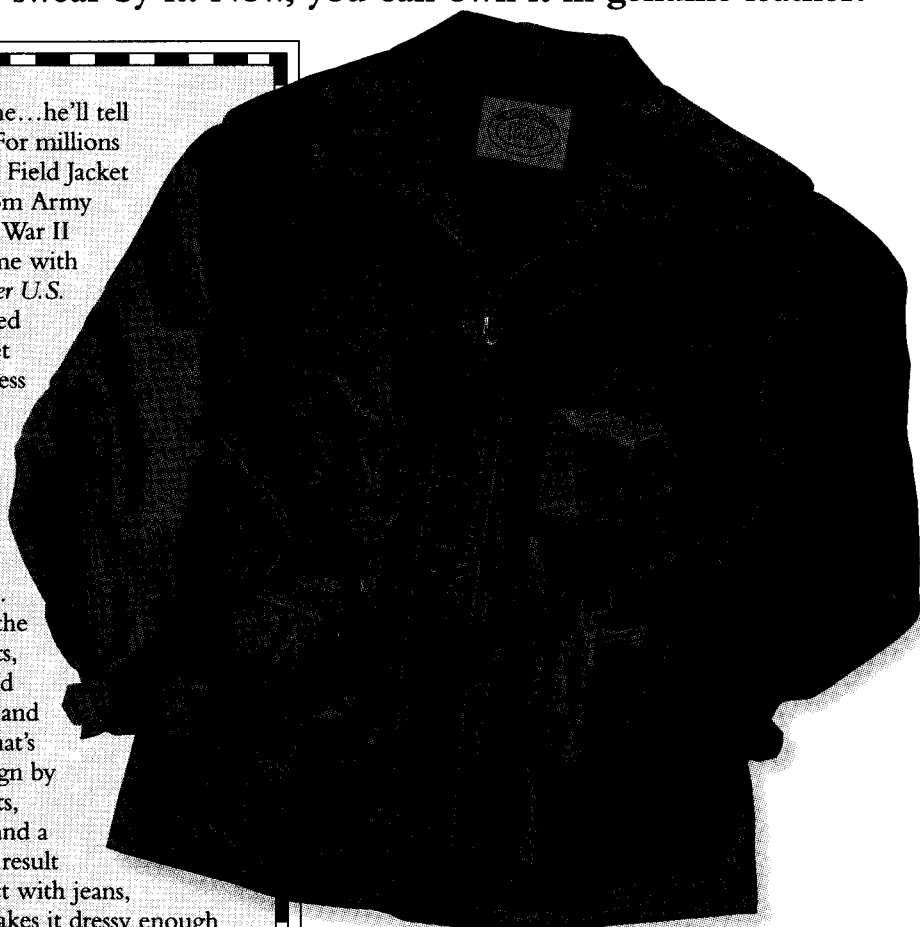
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Pearse and Connolly. Frank died defending the honor of Ireland—as conceived by Pearse and Connolly—against the looters. That is indeed dying for Ireland, by the most exigent standards.

Frank's story made far more impact on my imagination than Tom's. Tom died "out there," one of millions of casualties, in a land then unknown to me. But Frank's story was unique, vivid, dramatic—and it had happened where I lived. Every Sunday my mother and I and Aunt Mary—Tom's widow—attended mass in Rathmines Church (neither my father nor Hanna went to mass). That was the church where young Coade had gone for his "devotions" before leaving, clutching his fatal rosary beads, for his rendezvous with Bowen-Colthurst and death.

At one level of my imagination the story of Frank Skeffington blended with the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. The image must have been suggested by the thought of the bearded pacifist being hustled through the streets by brutal soldiery to his death—a thought that blended in my mind with the Stations of the Cross in Rathmines Church. The Dublin Via Dolorosa stretched south through O'Connell Street, then west for a bit along Dame Street, then south again, through George's Street and Camden Street to Portobello Bridge, and over the bridge to Calvary in Portobello Barracks.

The Passion image should not mislead anyone into thinking that my feelings toward Frank Skeffington resembled those of a devout Christian toward Jesus Christ. Not at all. My attitude toward Jesus Christ was made up of puzzlement, discomfort, and awe. My attitude toward Frank (whom, of course, I never actually knew either) was closely similar. Frank, I was told, was a martyr. I agreed: he was a martyr in the most literal sense, in that he exposed himself to death in order to bear witness. I wanted to bear witness, all right—and have borne some—but I didn't want to die. There was a general assumption all around me (or almost all; my father didn't share in it, although he expressed this only by having nothing to say about the matter) that to follow in the footsteps of Frank Skeffington was the finest course a young person could pursue. Considering where those footsteps had taken him, I didn't agree. And I didn't want to follow in Tom Kettle's footsteps either. Yet there was attraction there as well as repulsion; the combined result was a kind of wary fascination that has lasted all my life. Also, there was something distinguished about having a crucifixion in the family.

When I came to know more about the personalities of the two men who had died the year before I was born, I found that I would have liked Tom but not Frank. Tom in his heyday had been a most attractive human being: witty, humorous, and strikingly handsome, a notable talker, kind and

companionable. He may have been "wrong" politically, but as a human being he was all

right. But there seemed to me, from what I heard from my mother, to be something wrong with Frank as a human being. He was consistently priggish and occasionally cruel, and when the cruelty appeared, it took priggish forms. My mother told two relevant stories that shocked her, greatly though she admired him. My great-uncle Father Eugene Sheehy drank quite heavily in his old age for consolation. Frank, of course, disapproved. On one occasion Frank took Father Eugene's bottle of whiskey and poured it down the sink before the old priest's stricken eyes. The other story concerned Frank's son, Owen. Frank was a disciplinarian, but his principles forbade corporal punishment. So his way of punishing Owen was to lock him up for hours in a completely dark room. When I heard those stories, I decided I was glad that I had never had to contend with Uncle Frank. But I kept that opinion to myself. It was literally unspeakable in our family, belonging in the realm of blasphemy. Even today, as I write it, I shiver slightly.

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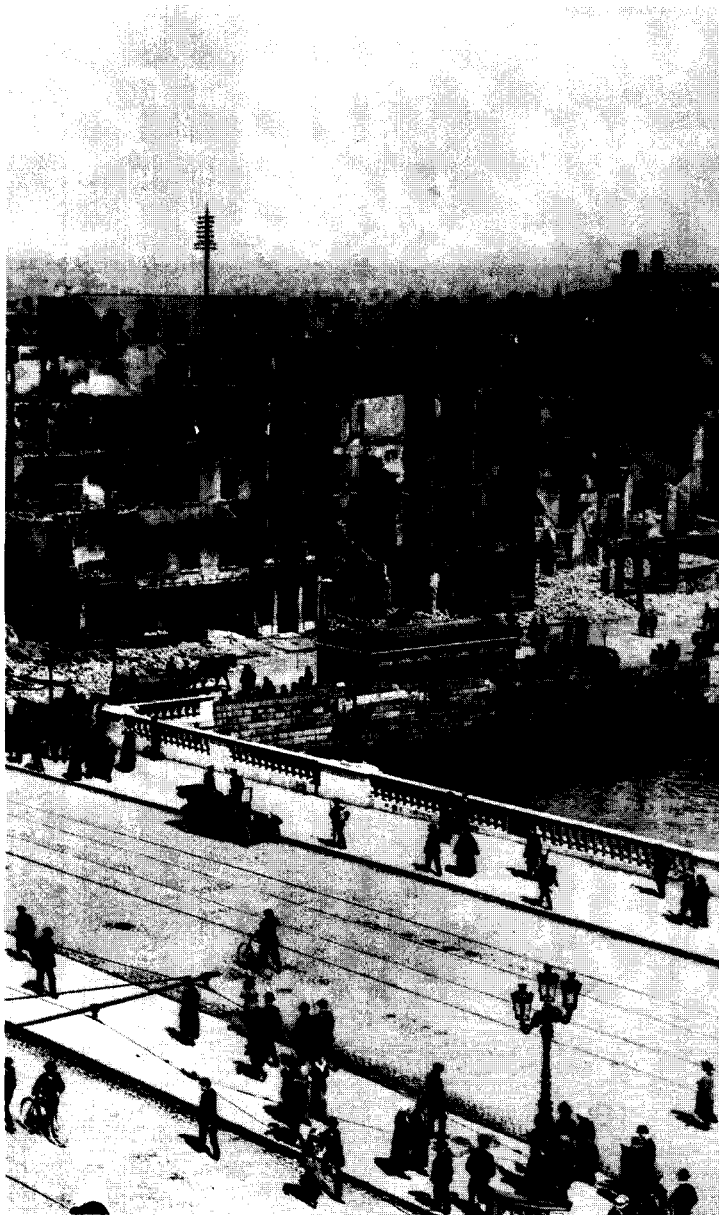


A Dublin thoroughfare during the then-unpopular Easter Rising of 1916

The End of the Parliamentary Party

THE Easter Rising was unpopular in Dublin at the time, but a revulsion in favor of the rebels followed the execution of fifteen leaders. The executions were spaced out over a period of weeks. The last man executed, out of the fifteen, was James Connolly. Wounded during the rising, he had lost the use of his legs, and as he faced the firing squad, he was strapped to a kitchen chair—a detail that increased the nationwide revulsion.

The revulsion was primarily against the British, but it also told against the Irish Parliamentary Party, with consequences that directly affected my family and its standing in the community. Rebel sympathizers spread the story that the party had cheered the news of the executions. One such sympathizer was Arthur Griffith, later to be President of the Irish Free State. One day he was telling this story to a Dublin



crowd that happened to include my grandfather, David Sheehy. David mounted the platform, confronted Griffith, and shouted, “You lie! You lie and you know you lie!”

Grandfather was right. Griffith was lying and knew he was lying. The Irish Parliamentary Party had vehemently opposed the executions and had demanded their cessation. All the same, the party’s position with regard to them was uncomfortable. The Liberals, then in government, were the party’s Home Rule allies, and the party’s influence with its allies had been insufficient to avert the executions. (Actually the Liberal government in this period probably did not have sufficient influence with the military to avert the executions, but the public was unaware of this factor.) And the party could not break with its allies over the executions, because the alliance represented its only hope of winning Home Rule at the end of the war. So my grandfather and his friends were in deep trouble. A government decision in April of 1918, at the time of the last great German offensive, to introduce conscription in Ireland drove them near to despair. The entire party withdrew from Westminster to mount a protest in Ireland. This tactic rebounded, because it was seen as an acknowledgment of the failure of parliamentary action, the policy to which the party had been committed since its foundation.

Conversely, the withdrawal of the Irish MPs was seen as confirming the validity of the principles of the Sinn Féin Party, representing the ideals of the Easter Rising. Sinn Féin fought and won the elections of December, 1918. The Irish Parliamentary Party was wiped out.

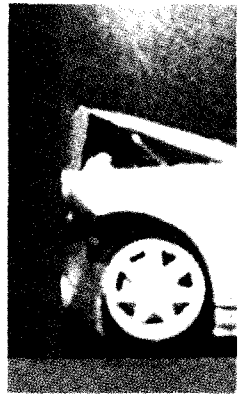
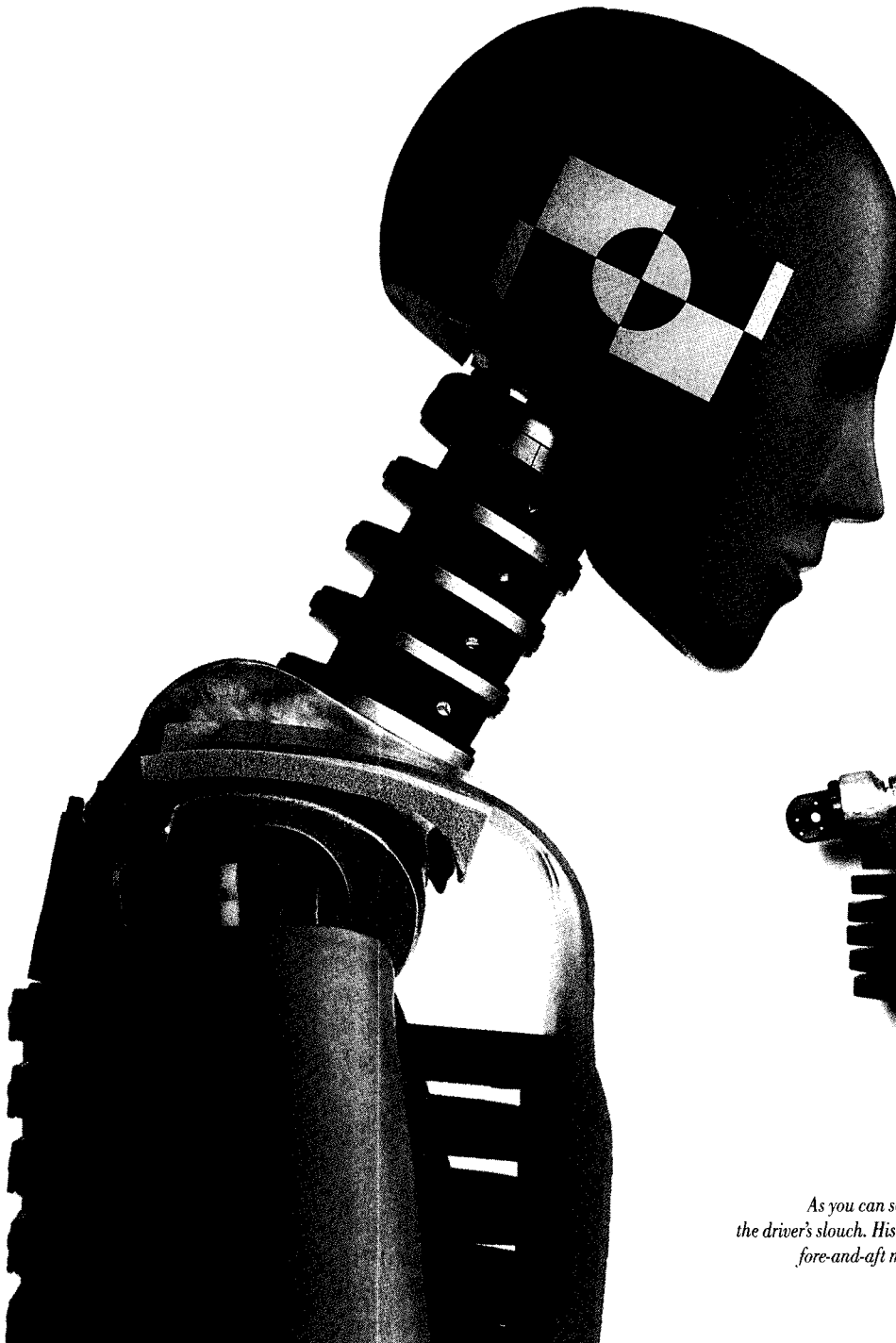
I was just over a year old at the time of those elections, which had negative implications for the status of our family, and therefore for my own prospects in life. In the Ireland of before December, 1918, my grandfather had been a person of considerable consequence—one of the most senior members of the party, and the right-hand man of its last leader, John Dillon. The family’s sense of its own importance in the first decade of the century was ironically acknowledged by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, in the passage in which he recorded a conversation between my grandmother, the wife of “Mr David Sheehy, M.P.,” and a deferential priest, Father Connree.

If Home Rule had been achieved by the parliamentary route, David Sheehy would certainly have had a seat in the Irish Cabinet. Our whole family would have been part of the establishment of the new Home Rule Ireland. As it was, we were out in the cold, superseded by a new Republican elite. To be connected with the Irish Parliamentary Party had been an asset; it was now a liability.

“The Troubles”

THE only member of our family who now had prestige was Hanna. Hanna had escaped from Ireland toward the end of 1916, dressed as a sailor (according to family tradition), and had reached America, where she had lectured on “British imperialism as I have known it.” Her

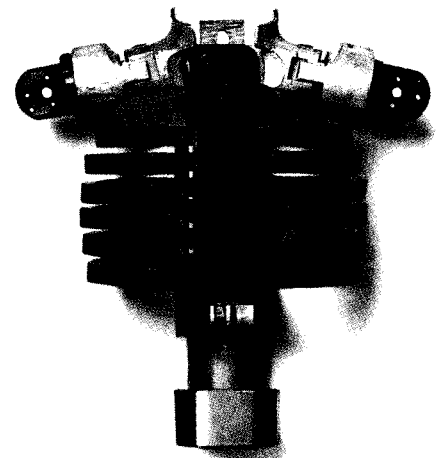
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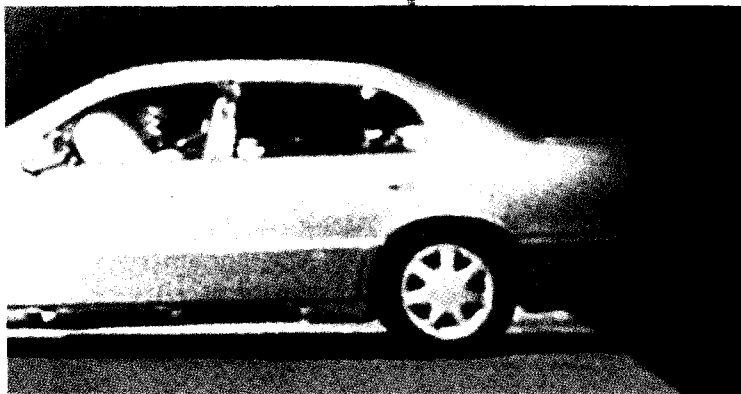


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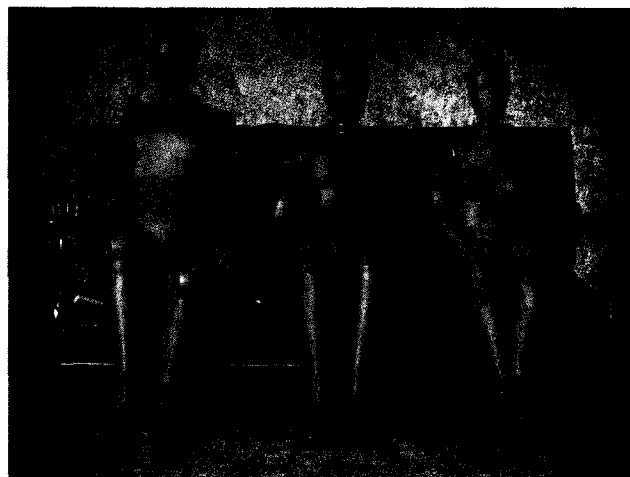
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object was, of course, to try to keep America from entering the war on Britain's side. Her anti-British activities won her many friends and admirers in Sinn Féin, and she was part of the new Ireland in a sense that the rest of our family was not.

I am sure that Hanna, in that lecture, stuck to the literal truth of her terrible experience of Easter Week, 1916. The only distortion in her lecture was contextual, in the implication that this extraordinary episode was typical of British imperialism as Hanna had known it. Actually our family's relationship to British imperialism, up to but not including 1916, had been a fairly comfortable one. Hanna's father was still sitting in the Imperial Parliament at the time she was speaking. In the heyday of the Second British Empire, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Irish had been among the ruling peoples of the empire. The Irish Parliamentary Party had made and unmade governments of the empire. Its importance was recognized by no less an imperialist than Cecil Rhodes, when he sent a large donation to Charles Stewart Parnell. Irish people were prominent in the Indian civil service and in the colonial service—and this at a time when neither India nor any other colony was represented in the Imperial Parliament. Hanna's brother Richard Sheehy had been a legal adviser to the governor of St. Kitts, in the West Indies.

Most of the people who voted for Sinn Féin that December did not realize that what they were going to get was guerrilla war against the forces of the Crown. If they had realized that, they would probably not have voted for Sinn Féin. But Sinn Féin in its election campaign made it appear that its objective—sovereign independence for all Ireland—was obtainable by peaceful means. It would appeal to the peace conference at Versailles, relying on President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, especially self-determination. The peace conference Sinn Féin had now to appeal to was, of course, that of the victorious Allied and Associated Powers. But those who had prepared the Proclamation of the Republic, in 1916, were thinking of an entirely different peace conference: one dominated by the Central Powers, the "gallant allies in Europe" referred to in the proclamation. The idea that the Peace Conference of the Allied and Associated Powers would even give a courteous hearing to people who thought of the defeated Central Powers as their gallant allies belonged in the world of fantasy. Sinn Féin knew that, but the electorate did not, and swallowed the bait.

Those who were elected in December—or, rather, as many of them as were at large—met in Dublin on January 21, 1919, as Dáil Éireann (the Parliament of Ireland). They declared the independence of Ireland and prepared to govern

the country as if the British were not there. They did not explicitly declare war on Britain, but as it happened, the guerrilla war broke out on the day the Dáil met, when two policemen were shot dead in Tipperary by armed men who were (in theory) responsible to the Dáil.

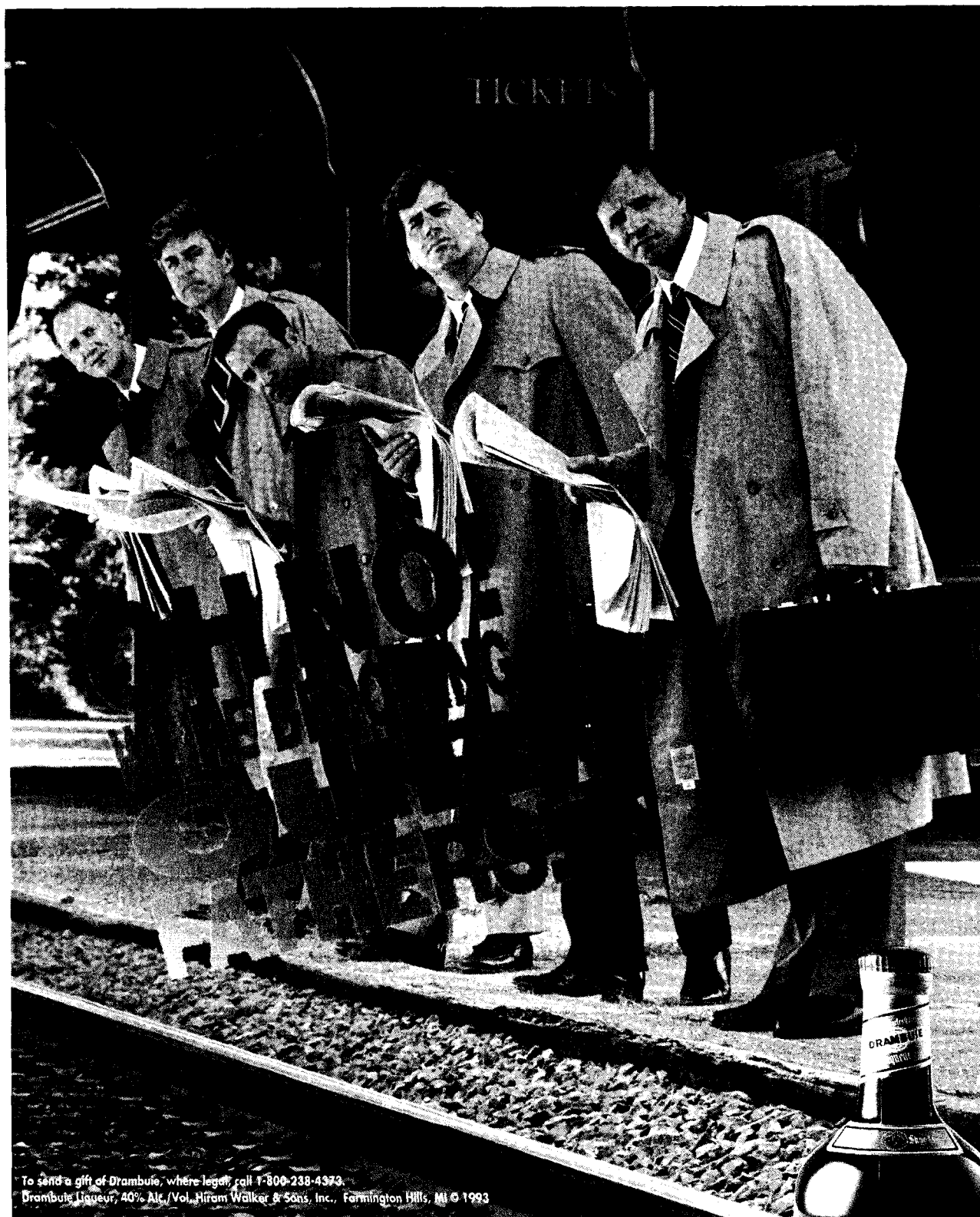
There followed two and a half years of rebellion, repression, reprisal, and counterreprisal, with plenty of atrocities on both sides. From March of 1920 to the summer of 1921 the British tried to stamp out the rebellion by the use of a force popularly known as the Black-and-Tans, after their uniforms, which were a mixture of police black and military khaki. This force was licensed to carry out collective reprisals and generally terrorize the population. My earliest memory is of an encounter—an entirely harmless one—with

a Black-and-Tan. I was about three years old, and my nursemaid, Sadie Franklin, was taking me for a walk on the Rathmines Road, in the middle-class South Dublin suburb where we lived. The Black-and-Tan was sitting on a gate. Sadie started when she noticed him and hurried me on past him. I looked at him. He was a small man with a rather sad expression, and he just sat there, slowly swinging a revolver up and down. But he had clearly frightened the wits out of Sadie, without doing anything at all. As I was a bit frightened of Sadie, this achievement made a strong impression on my infant mind.

During this period, popularly referred to as the Troubles, Hanna was serving as a judge in the Republican courts set up by the First Dáil. This is hard to reconcile with her pacifism. The violence that had Ireland in its grip in those days was the result of the Dáil's attempt to replace existing institutions with institutions of its own, including courts. Those courts were in fact an integral part of the rebellion. You may be sure that no one was ever brought before a Republican court for the murder of a policeman. If any Republican was asked about that, the orthodox answer was (and still is) that the killing of a policeman who was in the service of the British Crown was not murder but a legitimate act of war. But that was not a distinction that a *pacifist* could explicitly acknowledge.

In my youth I thought that Hanna had been driven—understandably, by grief and anger at the murder of her husband—away from pacifism and into emotional nationalism and association with the Republican war effort. In much later retrospect, and after giving more thought to the relationship between James Connolly and Frank Skeffington, I no longer see any inconsistency between Hanna's position and Frank's. Both powerfully felt the tug of emotional nationalism and insurrection. Both came to interpret pacifism in a minimalist manner, as requiring their own personal absten-

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tion from violence but not precluding alliance with violent rebels in a civil capacity. Hanna's membership in the Republican court was entirely consistent with the role assigned (as I believe) to Frank Skeffington by James Connolly on the margin of the Easter Rising: keeping it from stain.

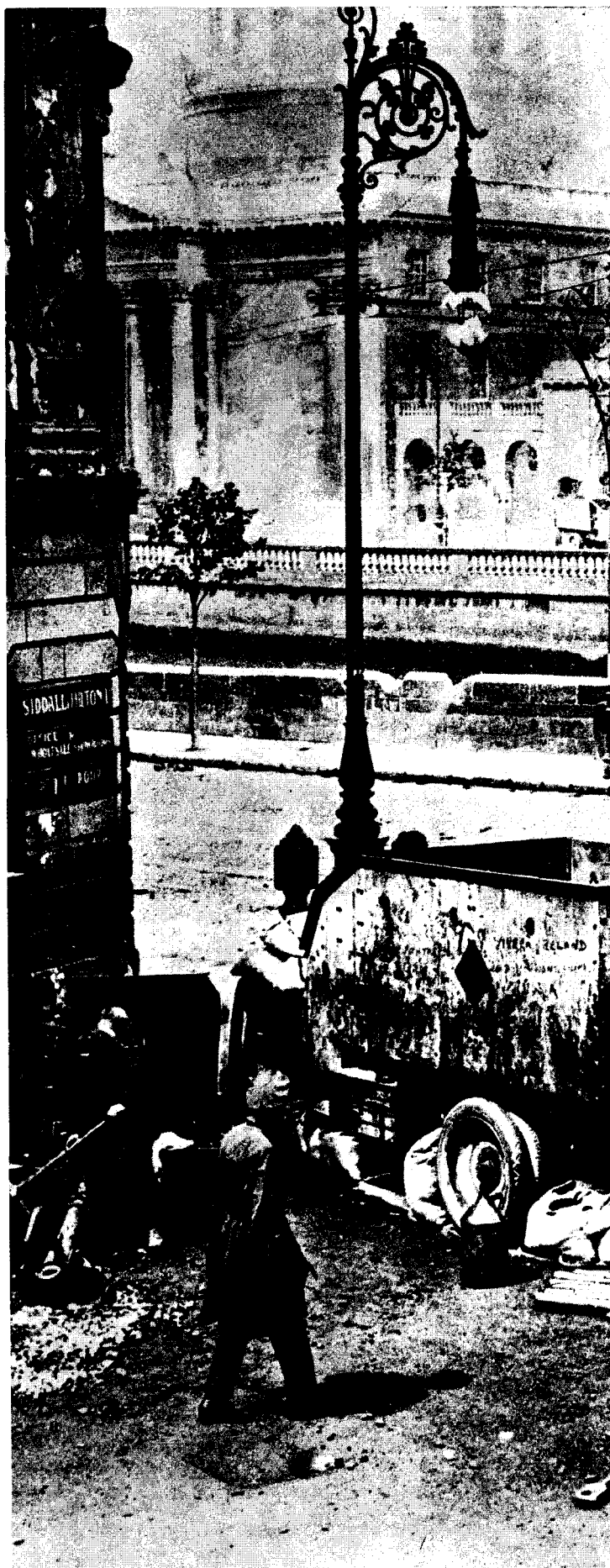
In July of 1919, at a public meeting in Dublin, Hanna declared, according to her biographers, that Ireland "was returning to the tradition of Wolfe Tone, of Robert Emmet, of the Manchester Martyrs, and of the leaders of the Easter Rising—all of whom had fought and died for that tradition." That tradition—of physical-force nationalism—was of course altogether incompatible with the pacifism for which she and her husband had stood, up to the outbreak of the First World War.

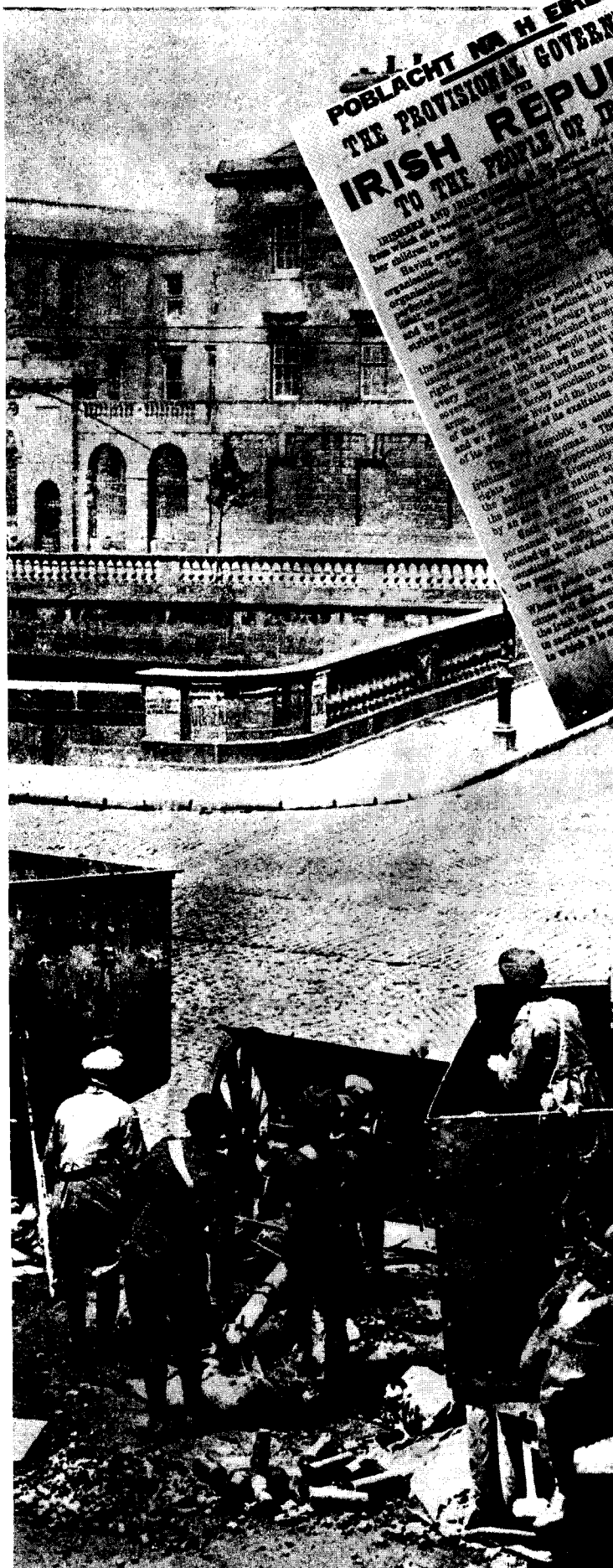
These events and positions were important, and puzzling, to me as a boy. The strongest influence on me was that of my cousin Owen Skeffington. Owen saw himself as faithful to his father's causes: pacifism and socialism. He was in fact *more* faithful to these causes than his father had been; it is impossible to imagine Owen joining an "army council," even briefly. Owen was firmly and explicitly opposed to the Republicanism of the IRA. His mother was ambiguous and reticent about this, but in fact gave support to the IRA throughout the twenties and thirties, in a civilian capacity. Whenever an IRA man was sent to jail, convicted of whatever crime, you could count on Hanna to be among those calling for "the release of Republican prisoners." Owen neither joined in those calls nor criticized his mother for making them. The relation between mother and son was affectionate but politically and philosophically fraught, heavily charged with mutual forbearance expressed through cryptic silences. The rest of us—my father, my mother, Mary Kettle, and me—were aware of the difference and the tension but never referred to them. It was a taboo zone. Like Owen, we all refrained from challenging Hanna's repeated calls for the release of the Republican prisoners. To that limited but real extent we were all under the spell of "the Republican movement," which is the respectful way of referring to the IRA. I was over fifty before I was able to break that spell completely, and by that time both Hanna and Owen were dead.

The Siege of the Four Courts

LET us now return to the historical narrative, at the point where we left off: the summer of 1921. By this time both sides were getting tired of rebellion and repression. A truce was arrived at, which came into force on July 11, so that negotiations for a treaty could take place. On the British side, the foundation for a workable settlement had by then been laid, through the passage of the Government of Ireland Act in December of 1920. That act set up two political entities: "Northern Ireland" and "Southern Ireland." "Northern Ireland" was the entity that is still known by that

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name; "Southern Ireland" was the rest of the island, now known as the Republic of Ireland. The representatives of the majority in Northern Ireland accepted the act, and the Parliament of Northern Ireland was opened by King George V on June 22, 1921, a few weeks before the opening of the treaty negotiations with the Sinn Féin leaders. These leaders all, of course, rejected the Government of Ireland Act. But it was the object of the British Prime Minister to get the Sinn Féin leaders and those who supported them to accept something that would be territorially identical, and in other ways similar, to the "Southern Ireland" of the act.

The Sinn Féin leaders—Eamon de Valera, Michael Collins, and Arthur Griffith—all knew that what was obtainable through negotiation would be similar to "Southern Ireland" but with some improvement on it. The British were not about to hand over Northern Ireland, whose Parliament their King had just opened, and even if they had wished to hand it over, they couldn't have delivered.

Both Collins and Griffith, who signed the treaty, and De Valera, who rejected it, knew that the Republic proclaimed in 1916 was not obtainable. De Valera's own version (Document No. 2) of what *should* have been obtained was so similar to the actual treaty that hardly anyone knew what he was talking about. But less complex minds, among the rank and file, saw the treaty as a betrayal of the Republic and no better than the Home Rule with Partition that the Irish Parliamentary Party had been reviled for being willing to accept. If this was the outcome, all the sacrifices had been in vain. And there was much force in this argument.

The Dáil, however, by a small majority, and after an extremely bitter debate, ratified the treaty that set up the Irish Free State (territorially identical with "Southern Ireland"), and a subsequent election returned a majority of supporters of the treaty. But these democratic transactions had no validity in the eyes of those who rejected the treaty. They were not to be governed by the outcome of any consultations restricted to the living. To them, the only mandate that counted was that of the Proclamation of Easter Monday, 1916, on behalf of a personified Ireland. "In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood. . . . The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of

1922: the retaking of the Four Courts from adherents of the 1916 Proclamation

every Irishman and Irishwoman.” This document was signed by seven men and has been felt by some Irish people in every generation since to be sanctified by their blood sacrifice, perpetually binding and above all man-made laws.

A party of men imbued with these convictions occupied and fortified the Four Courts, Dublin—the center of the Irish legal system—on April 13, 1922. They were left in possession until after the post-treaty elections, which took place on June 16 and gave the pro-treaty party a majority. The new government, headed by Michael Collins, decided to tolerate no longer this armed challenge to its authority, and the bombardment of the Four Courts began on the morning of June 28.

When the guns woke me, just after 4:00 A.M., I was interested but not frightened. I was not frightened because my father was not frightened. I trusted him absolutely, and if he was not frightened, there was nothing to be frightened about. Nor was there. Our house was more than a mile away from the scene of the action, on the south side of the city, and the guns were pointed north, across the Liffey.

I was told later that when my mother started at one explosion, I reassured her: “Don’t worry, Mammy, it’s only an eighteen-pounder.” Obviously I had learned this from my father. On consulting a textbook recently, I was pleased to find that his information had been accurate: the two field guns used for the retaking of the Four Courts were indeed eighteen-pounders. More significant to Republicans than the caliber of the guns, however, was their source: they were on loan to the Free State government from the British Army. That became part of the Republican Black Legend of the Irish Civil War.

But the Black Legend did not prevent the Free State from winning the civil war, a year later. Nor did it inhibit the leaders on the losing side, and most of their followers, five years later, from successfully working the democratic institutions they had once attempted to overthrow. The Republic of Ireland—as the former Irish Free State is now known—became a stable democracy. But few would have predicted that outcome at the time of the bombardment without which it would not have been achieved.

Sacral Nationalism

ALL my life I have been both fascinated and puzzled by nationalism and religion; by the interaction of the two forces, sometimes in unison, sometimes antagonistic; and by the manifold ambiguities in all of this. But it wasn’t until I came to write the above autobiographical essay that I began to realize that the relation of our family to this insurrection had been significantly different from what I imagined.

Thinking then in more literal terms than I can now, I had thought of Frank’s pacifism, socialism, and agnosticism as completely antithetical to the mystical, messianic Catholic nationalism of Patrick Pearse, identifying the Crucifixion

and Resurrection of Jesus Christ with the crucifixion and resurrection of a personified Ireland. Owen saw his father’s position as antithetical to that of Pearse, and I long saw Owen’s father through Owen’s eyes.

I now believe that the positions had *once* been antithetical, but that the antithesis had ceased to exist by Easter of 1916. It was James Connolly who had broken it down. As late as December of 1915 Connolly had mocked Pearse’s mystical militarism and sacramental exaltation of “the red wine of the battlefields.” But by 1916 Connolly had fallen under Pearse’s spell—an expression that has to be taken almost literally in the circumstances. By February of 1916 the former Marxist was writing like a person hypnotized by Patrick Pearse:

But deep in the heart of Ireland has sunk the sense of the degradation wrought upon its people—so deep and so humiliating that no agency less powerful than the red tide of war on Irish soil will ever be able to enable the Irish race to recover its self-respect. . . . Without the slightest trace of irreverence but in all due humility and awe, we recognize that of us, as of mankind before Calvary, it may truly be said, “without the shedding of Blood there is no Redemption.” [See C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, pp. 318–319.]

Frank was Connolly’s disciple, as Connolly’s choice of him as his literary executor makes clear. So when Connolly became Pearse’s disciple, Skeffington became Pearse’s disciple at second hand, though with reservations. He could not take arms along with Pearse and Connolly, or use the Pearsean language, which was so exotically at variance with that of his own old ideologies. Connolly, as we have just seen, had already jumped a similar fence, with some panache. But the fences were only similar, not identical. Connolly had never been a pacifist. Skeffington must have winced, at least at first, at Connolly’s new vocabulary. Yet he did not demur. He was being pulled toward Pearse in the wake of Connolly.

In 1940, twenty-four years after the deaths of Pearse and Connolly and Frank Skeffington, I was on the Great Blasket Island, then Gaelic-speaking and now uninhabited. I heard a famous local storyteller, Peig, give her version of Frank Skeffington’s death: how he was struck down by Bowen-Colthurst as he came out from mass with his rosary beads in his hand. The folk memory had conflated the figure of Skeffington with that of the boy Coade. At the time I thought Peig’s version absurd. I then still thought of Frank as Owen did: as a militant agnostic. He certainly *had* been that, but I don’t think he was by Easter, 1916. The whole enterprise of the Easter Rising, which Frank served in his own peculiar way, was one of exalted Irish Catholic nationalism. James Connolly, who had also once been an agnostic and a Marxist, was to be fortified by the last rites of the Church. And I think Frank would have gone the same way had Bowen-Colthurst permitted, which of course he would never have done. So the folk intuition was not so far off.

Hanna's Night

HANNA Sheehy-Skeffington took part in the protests that turned into a riot on the fourth night of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. On the first night of *Plough*, February 8, 1926, W. B. Yeats, the directing spirit of the Abbey Theatre since its foundation, made the occasion something of a political demonstration. This was less than three years after the end of the Irish Civil War. Yeats was a member of the Senate of the Irish Free State, having been nominated to it by the victors in the civil war, and he invited some of the luminaries of the Free State government to the performance and dinner. Gabriel Fallon, a close friend of O'Casey's, suggested that Yeats hoped the play would "score over his Republican enemies." This was an understatement. Yeats knew that the play would drive the Republicans almost out of their minds. They would see it as both the hijacking and the defilement of the 1916 rising, by the poet-senator who had betrayed its ideals. In the conditions of post-Civil War Dublin, violent protests were certain. Yeats had no objection to that. He enjoyed real-life theater, with the Abbey at the center of the excitement. O'Casey, on the other hand (a little like Salman Rushdie later), seems to have had no idea of the fires he was kindling.

The first night, with a safe Free State audience, passed off without incident. As Hanna's biographers tell the story: "On the second night, there were some audience objections when the Republican flag was brought into the pub in Act II and on the third night these protests were even more pronounced and seemed to be directed at the young prostitute." Gabriel Fallon is described as having seen the protesters "as divided into two groups: those, like Hanna, who objected on nationalistic grounds and others who found the play morally offensive." This is rather too neat, and too cerebral. The whole protest was *both* nationalistic *and* religious (not moralistic).

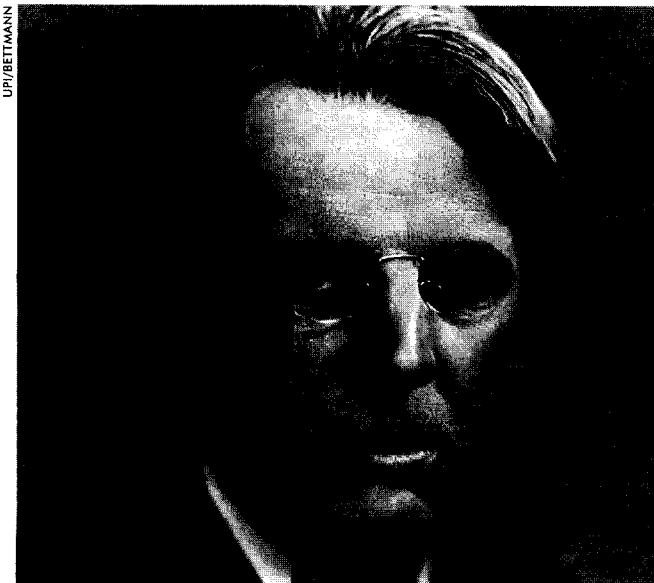
For Irish Republicans the Easter Rising was (and still is, for those who are killing in its name) a sacred event—as Pearse intended it to be, timing it accordingly. *The Plough and the Stars* was felt as a desecration. *Both* the pub and the prostitute were part of the desecration, which occurs when the Republican flag is brought into the pub and when Pearse's voice is heard proclaiming the Republic in that unhallowed context.

The second and third nights of *Plough* were the warm-up. The big night was the fourth, Thursday, Hanna's night. Eamon de Valera—then seen as the heir of Pearse and Connolly—had appointed Hanna director of organization of Sinn Féin, and I have no doubt that she organized the Thursday-night demonstration. Her biographers wrote:

All accounts agree that on Thursday night, disapproval climaxed in a Republican demonstration: all seem to agree that Hanna led it. . . . During the second act she arose and shouted that the play was "trading the men of 1916." From that point on nobody could hear the dialogue on stage and minor battles were breaking out in various parts of the theatre. Through it all, Hanna continued to orate. [Hanna's feminist biographers are uncomfortable with her passionate nationalism—C.C.O'B.] Before the fourth act began, Yeats brought in the police and the hall was cleared of protestors. Hanna, leaving the theatre under police escort, made one last dramatic speech. "I am one of the widows of Easter Week," she said. "It is no wonder that you



Clockwise: Hanna and Owen Sheehy-Skeffington; Sean O'Casey; W. B. Yeats



do not remember the men of Easter Week, because none of you fought on either side."

In Hanna's mind Frank had joined the sixteen executed leaders of the rising. And in spirit he did indeed belong with them.

The Ghost of Patrick Pearse

THE controversy continued in print, in *The Irish Independent*, between Hanna and O'Casey. There was one sentence in the exchange which I read with another of those shivers, when I came across it recently in Hanna's biography. Referring to the spirit of 1916 she wrote, "That Mr. O'Casey is blind to it does not necessarily prove that it is non-existent, but merely that his vision is defective."

O'Casey's vision already *was* defective, in the literal sense, and he was threatened with blindness. Hanna, being a civilized person, would never have deliberately alluded to a physical defect of an opponent. But the demon of nationalism, which had her in its grip, selected, through her unconscious mind, the metaphor that would hit the enemy at his weakest point.

At the end of the same letter, she took a swipe at Yeats: "'For they shall be remembered for ever' by the people if not by the Abbey directorate."

This was an allusion to the punch line of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, which Yeats had written at a time when he, like Hanna now, was in the grip of manic nationalism, in his case through Maud Gonne, Hanna's friend and ally. Still, considering the heat of the circumstances, she dealt gently enough with Yeats, whose poetry she admired. She knew about good writing, and could appreciate it even coming from an ideological enemy. I owe a lifelong debt to her for that characteristic, for it was she who first introduced me to good writing, through the works of that great British imperialist Rudyard Kipling. She gave me *The Jungle Book* for my ninth birthday. That was near the end of the year of *The Plough and the Stars*.

The climax of the controversy took the form of a public debate between Hanna and O'Casey, which of course Hanna won hands down. Her biographers wrote,

When O'Casey's turn came, he had to face an already hostile audience. His vision was bad, his glasses blurred, and he had great difficulty deciphering his notes. After struggling for some five minutes, he said that he could not go on and sat down. Hanna sympathized, sensing that, had he been an experienced public speaker like herself, he would have "had a lot more to say."

Possibly, as she watched O'Casey's performance, Hanna experienced some remorse for that metaphor of hers. Shortly after that grisly encounter O'Casey left Ireland for good. Having experienced, on more than one occasion over the years, brief touches of my aunt Hanna's cold and measured wrath, I can well understand O'Casey's flight, after bearing the brunt of her all-out attack. Yet the odd thing is that although I was more than eight years old at the time of these stirring events, in which a leading member of our family was a protagonist, I have no personal memory of all this. I didn't read newspapers at the time, we didn't have a radio, and these matters were never discussed when our extended family met for the regular Sunday dinner at my mother's house. Divisive subjects were avoided there, in the presence of the young, and this was one such. My father, my mother, and my aunt Mary could not possibly approve of what Hanna was doing, but they

were not going to argue with her on a subject that made Frank's ghost walk. Owen—who must have suffered intensely in those February days—did argue with his mother, to no avail, but did not say anything to me about any of this at the time.

About four or five years later, when I was better able to understand, Owen let me know, in a few careful words, that he did not share his mother's attitude toward O'Casey's play, and I was certainly glad of this. Owen was putting me quietly on my guard against the excesses of nationalism, notably the Irish kind, and I was to heed that warning, not immediately but increasingly in later life. Owen implied (and, I'm sure, believed) that his father, too, was opposed to nationalism, and I also believed that for a long time. Yet I can see now that Hanna was never more precisely faithful to her husband's ideas, *in the shape those ideas had taken by Easter, 1916*, than she showed herself to be in this episode over *The Plough and the Stars*. For the case against the play was that it desecrated the Easter Rising, by showing a group of Dubliners, including a whore, in a pub, listening to Patrick Pearse proclaiming the Republic. This was nothing less than the dramatic and retrospective equivalent of the looting that Frank sacrificed his life in an attempt to stop. In the terminology of Pearse's communiqué, the rising was being "besmirched." Both Frank and Hanna were committed, in heart and soul, to the defense of the immaculate conception of the Irish Republic. Both would have jibbed at that wording, wrongly scenting a sneer, but I have no doubt that it represents the underlying association of feelings, in their cases as in those of Pearse and Connolly. ☞

This is the first of several articles.

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SEASON PREVIEW

Winter Museum Exhibitions

THE AGE OF THE BAROQUE IN PORTUGAL

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.
November 7–February 6

An unimaginable wealth of precious stones and metals mined in the Portuguese colony of Brazil led to an era of opulence in Portugal. The age of the Baroque witnessed the revival of a sagging empire and, under the Crown's extensive patronage, a surge of brilliant artistic expression. Artists and craftsmen from throughout Europe flocked to Lisbon to create some of the finest work of the period in the decorative arts, jewelry, and religious sculpture. One hundred and twenty of these objects make up the first major art exhibition to be sent from Portugal to the United States. Among the treasures are a sixty-six-foot hand-painted tile frieze depicting 18th-century Lisbon, a seventy-two-foot gilded altarpiece, and an elaborately decorated gilded coach created for a celebrated ambassadorial procession in Rome. For tickets and information call (202) 737-4215.

LUCIAN FREUD: RECENT WORK

Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York City
December 16–March 13

Called the greatest living realist painter, the British artist Lucian Freud has rendered his portraits and figure studies with a meticulous precision and objective truthfulness for more than four decades. Typically stripping his subjects and isolating them in neutral studio settings, Freud conjures a disquieting stillness and conveys a powerful sense of spiritual detachment. This is the first American survey of



the artist's experiments in various media, and includes works completed as recently as November. Unlike the recent London showing, the Metropolitan exhibition contrasts seventy-five paintings and drawings produced since 1980 with a selection of works executed from 1945 to 1979. For tickets and information call (212) 535-7710.

TREASURE FROM AN AFRICAN KINGDOM: ROYAL ART OF BENIN

High Museum of Art
Atlanta, Georgia
January 25–April 24

For more than 500 years the artists of Benin created objects to glorify and commemorate the divine rulers of one of West Africa's most powerful kingdoms. Their remarkable sculptures, personal ornaments, musical instruments, and royal furnishings detail the complex etiquette of court life in this rigidly hierarchical society. The exhibition comprises 100 works on loan from the Metropolitan Museum's Perls Collection and is part of the last tour before much of the collection is installed permanently in New York City. Though it

surveys all the major types and styles of objects produced in Benin, the exhibition places particular emphasis on works produced from the 16th to the 19th century. For tickets and information call (404) 898-9540.

ROY LICHTENSTEIN

Museum of Contemporary Art
Los Angeles, California
January 30–April 3

Not since 1969 has there been a retrospective survey of the work of Roy Lichtenstein, one of the most influential artists of the postwar era. This major exhibition, the first Lichtenstein retrospective seen in Los Angeles, presents about 100 major paintings and selected sculptures. The artist was catapulted to fame in the 1960s by his flat-planed, primary-pigmented canvases of such mass-produced American cultural icons as comic strips, advertisements, and consumer products. Since then he has continued to create exceptionally innovative works, resulting in an oeuvre that has transformed the aesthetic vocabulary of this country. For tickets and information call (213) 626-6222.

UKIYO-E: THE FLOATING WORLD REVISITED

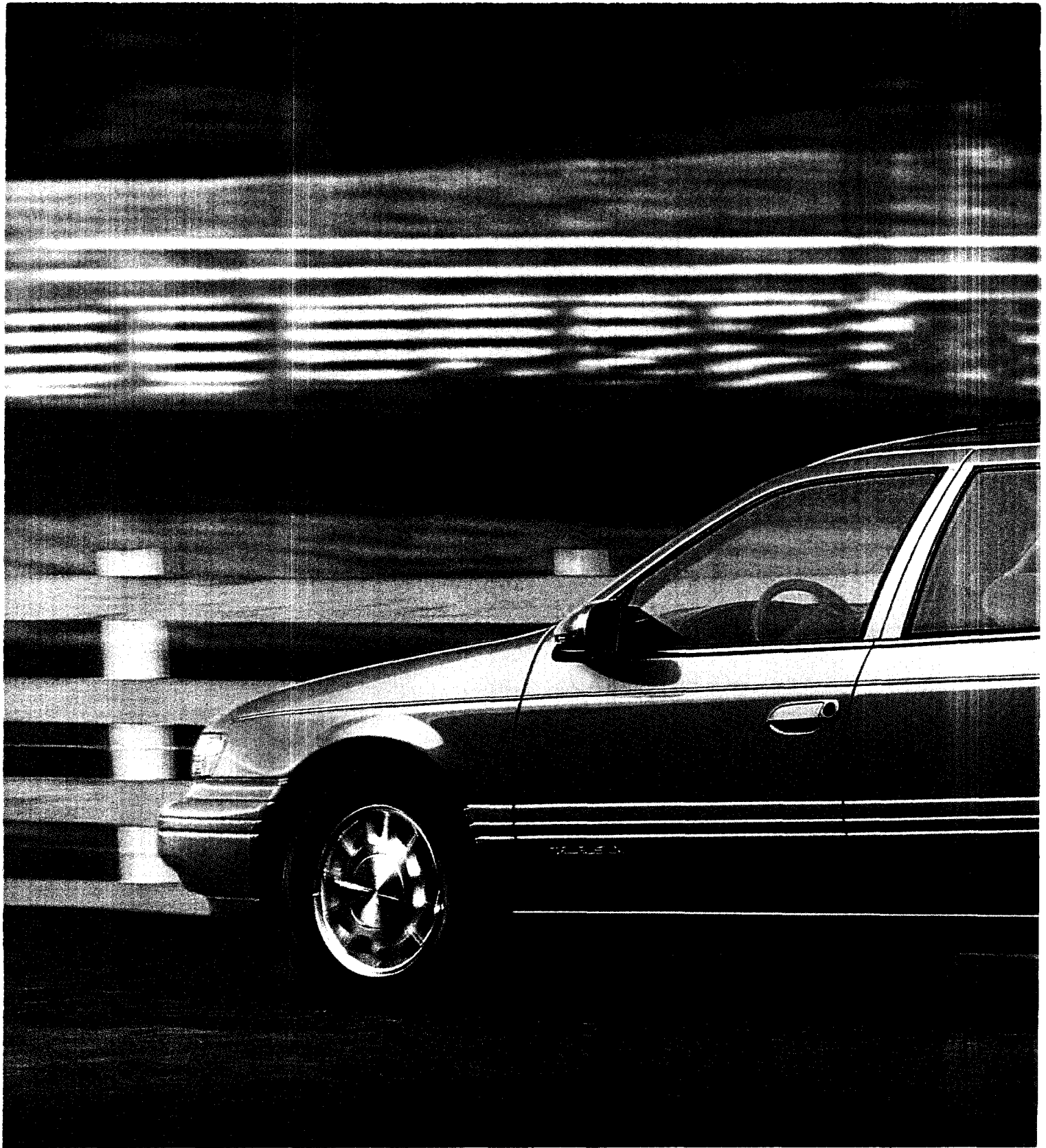
Cleveland Art Museum
Cleveland, Ohio
February 2–April 3

Amid political turmoil and social dislocation in late-18th-century Japan, a glittering world populated by actors, writers, and courtesans emerged as a grand diversion. This was "the floating world." The art it inspired, *ukiyo-e*—stylized figures of kimono-clad beauties, dramatic caricatures of actors, and landscapes by such masters as Kiyonaga, Utamaro, Sharaku, and Eishi—has come to epitomize Western notions of Japanese art. For the first time, an American exhibit of Japanese art re-creates the social context of *ukiyo-e* to illuminate layers of meaning in the art in surprising new ways. The exhibition comprises 150 works, including screen paintings, scrolls, illustrated books, and kimonos. For tickets and information call (216) 421-7340.

FORCES OF CHANGE: ARTISTS OF THE ARAB WORLD

National Museum of Women in the Arts
Washington, D.C.
February 6–May 15

Arab women artists in Western art movements such as impressionism, cubism, and abstract expressionism have for years eclipsed the innovators among Arab women artists, who are the focus of this exhibition of more than 160 works by artists from fifteen countries. In a variety of media, their work gives rare expression to day-to-day life in the Arab world, and comments on political conflict, life under occupation, and freedom of expression. For tickets and information call (202) 783-5000.



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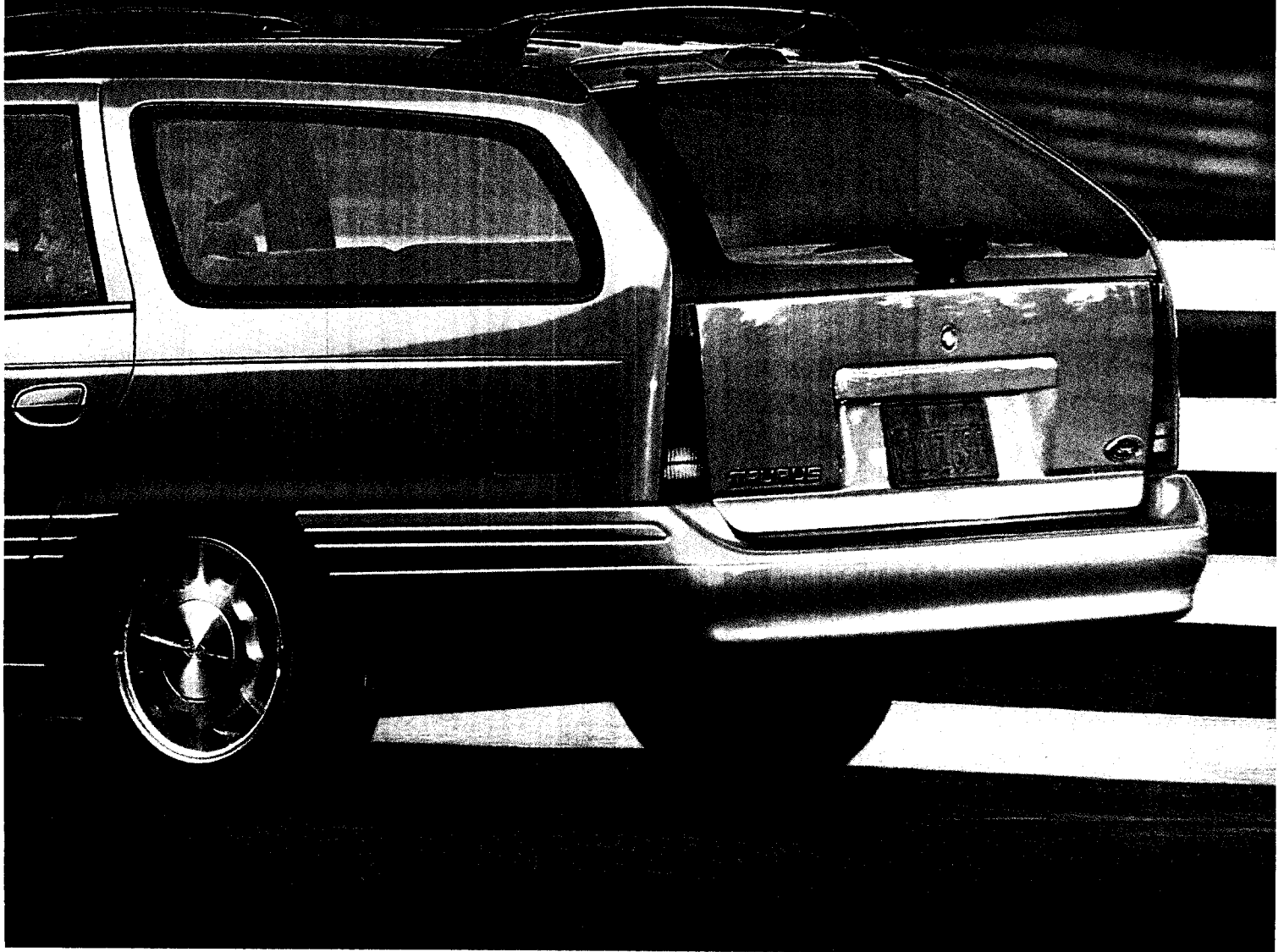
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What Is an Economy For?

by JAMES FALLOWS

We know the answer: to grow so that we can all buy more and keep the world economy spinning. Asians have a different answer: to grow so that a country can produce more—whoever buys the goods—and keep the country's, not the world's, economy spinning

EVERY country and culture is unique, and the “Asian” economic system naturally is something different in Singapore from what it is in Thailand or Japan. There are comparable variations among European and North American styles of capitalism. In their emphasis on industrial guidance and national policy, France and Germany are more Asian than they are American. In their approach to leisure and the good life, the Europeans are less like the new Asian model than like Americans. Still, four main patterns distinguish the Asian system from the prevailing Western model. Some of them are descended from old clashes between the German and Anglo-American philosophies of economic competition which were outlined here last month. They involve:

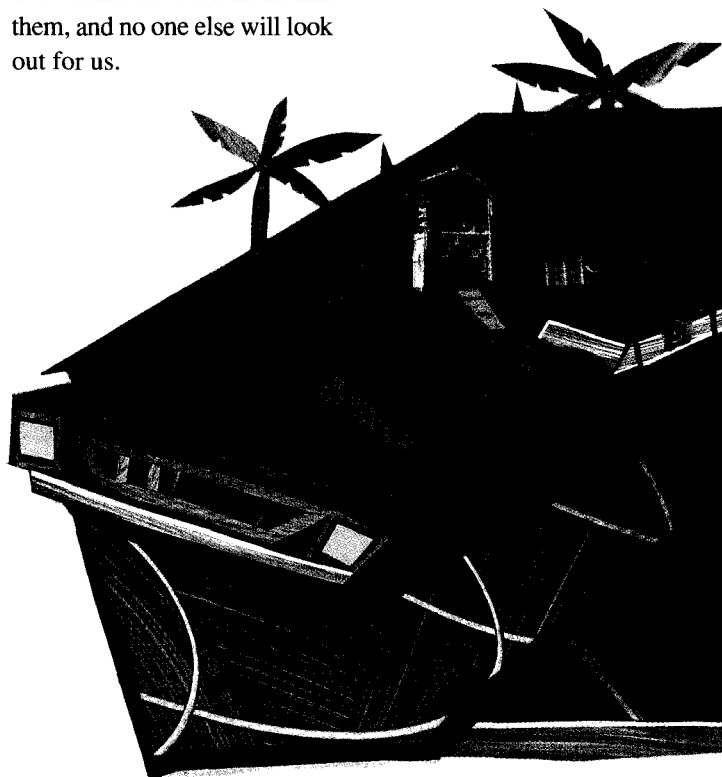
■ The *purpose* of economic life. In the American-style model the basic reason for having an economy is to raise the consumer's standard of living. In the Asian model it is to increase the collective national strength. Ideally, the goal is to make the nation independent and self-sufficient, so that it does not rely on outsiders for its survival. The American-style goal is materialistic; the Asian-style goal is political, and comes from long experience of being oppressed by people with stronger economies and technologies.

■ The view of *power* in setting economic policies. Anglo-American ideology views concentrated power as an evil (“Power corrupts, and absolute power . . .”). Therefore it has developed elaborate schemes for dividing and breaking up power when it becomes concentrated. The Asian-style model views concentrated power as a fact of life. It has developed elaborate systems for ensuring that the power is used for the long-term national good.

■ The view of *surprise* and unpredictability. The Anglo-American model views surprise as the key to economic life. We believe that it is precisely because markets are fluid and unpredictable that they work. The Asian-style system deeply mistrusts markets. It sees competition as a useful tool for keeping companies on their toes, but not as a way to resolve

any of the big questions of life—how a society should be run, in what direction its economy should unfold. This is, in Western terms, a military view of economics. Within the American military the Army competes with the Navy for funds, and competition within each branch keeps both the Army and the Navy sharp. But the services don't cast votes or place bids to decide where the nation should fight. Decisions like that are not left to a market.

■ The view of *national borders* and an us-versus-them concept of the world. People everywhere are xenophobic and exclusive, but in the Anglo-American model this is thought to be a lamentable, surmountable failing. The Asian-style model assumes that it is a natural and permanent condition. The world consists of us and them, and no one else will look out for us.



Consumers or Employees?

BY the tenets of post-Second World War Anglo-American economics, "What is an economy for?" isn't a very difficult question. In fact, it answers itself. Economic development means "more." If people have more choice, more leisure, more wealth, more opportunity to pursue happiness, society as a whole will be a success. In theory, any deal that the market permits will in the long run be good for society as a whole.

The Anglo-American system is long on theories. It is easy to pick up any English-language textbook and find theories proving that whatever gives more to the consumer is best for everyone. The Asian system is not so explicitly theoretical. Yet the fundamental purpose of the Asian model is evident from its performance. Its goal is to develop the productive base of the country—the industries either within the country or under the control of the country's citizens around the world. When it comes to a choice between the consumer's welfare and the producer's, it's really no choice at all.

In countless ways the most successful of today's Asian societies reveal their bias in favor of the producer. A few illustrations:

■ Japan and Korea are famous for protecting their rice mar-

kets. Even though the small plots, high land prices, and aged rural work force together make the cost of rice several times as high as it is elsewhere in the world, neither country gives its consumers the option of buying from overseas. In the Western world this is usually taken to be a quaint affectation. After all, Japanese and Korean spokesmen usually defend their policy in emotional terms ("our precious heritage"), and even if the markets were thrown wide open, there is a limit to how much foreign rice the Japanese or the Koreans could eat. (Because of crop failures following last year's wet summer, the Japanese government will allow emergency rice imports this year, but says it will close the market when the emergency has passed.)

In fact rice policy reveals a major, consequential producer bias. Especially in Japan, but also in Korea and Taiwan, farm protectionism is the crux of a sweeping anti-consumer social bargain. If



there is a single factor limiting consumption in these countries, it is the extremely high price of land; and if there is a single force that keeps the price up, it is the system that sets aside so much land (one quarter of the nonmountainous land in Japan) for the production of very expensive crops. "High land prices have caused the Japanese to act in ways they would not have otherwise," Susan Hanley, of the University of Washington, wrote in 1992. "It is not Japan's Asian cultural heritage that sets it apart . . . so much as the result of its artificially high land prices."

■ The more successful the economy in Asia, the more likely it is to have a rigged, anti-consumer, high-priced retail system. Japan's is the most successful, and its retail economy is the most cartelized and expensive. It's not simply that imported goods are expensive; Japanese-made goods are too. According to a survey at the end of 1991, clothes cost twice as much in Tokyo as in New York, food about three times as much, gasoline about two and a half times as much, and so on.

Anglo-American economic theory can explain why Japanese prices are so high: the retail system is full of cartels and monopolies. A network of laws, contracts, and commercial agreements in Japan discourages discounting and price competition. Until it was relaxed in the early 1990s, Japan's famous *dai ten ho*, or "big store law," effectively outlawed supermarkets, since it required that small local merchants give their approval (or be bribed into doing so) before a big store could be built. It is hard for familiar economic theory to accept that such an inefficient and anti-consumer system might last for many decades, with the apparent approval even of the victimized population of consumers.

The immediate reason the system lasts is the political power of small merchants, who—along with farmers and the construction industries—are big donors to the powerful Liberal Democratic Party in Japan. The more basic reason it lasts is that it helps producers, and in ways that offset the penalty to consumers. When competition in Europe or America pushes down the price of VCRs, cars, and semiconductor chips, Japanese producers can maintain high prices within Japan. In effect, producers wring monopoly profits out of their own people in order to build a war chest for competition overseas. When the yen doubled in value against the dollar from 1985 to 1988, retail prices in Japan

should have fallen significantly—but they barely budged. Japanese corporations were taxing their own people with artificially high prices so that they could maintain artificially low prices in export markets in Europe and North America. In return for this tax the Japanese got strong organizations and full employment. This may not be an attractive bargain from the Western viewpoint, and no individual Japanese or Korean likes paying higher prices. But as a social bargain it is seen as keeping the nation's producers strong and thereby keeping the social fabric intact.

The closest counterpart in American experience is AT&T before its breakup. Ma Bell penalized consumers in many ways. Rates were higher than they might have been. All equipment had to be "authorized" by AT&T. At the same time, Bell used the money to fund its research labs and all its other operations. This is a version of everyday practice in Japanese business: consumers have fewer choices than they might ideally have, and corporations absorb and redeploy the money they save.

■ In their own role as consumers even corporations in Japan and Korea reveal the anti-consumer bias of the Asian system. Their workers have for several decades traded artificially low wages for the promise of full employment. The wages are artificially low because through much of the postwar era earnings have lagged behind the increase in corporate productivity. By Western economic logic wages should have been rising much more rapidly. Similarly, Japanese and Korean corporations have traded artificially low profits for their equivalent of full employment, which is an ever-growing market share. In 1991 a business survey listed the thirty most profitable large companies in the world. Twenty-three of them were American, four were British, and none were Japanese.

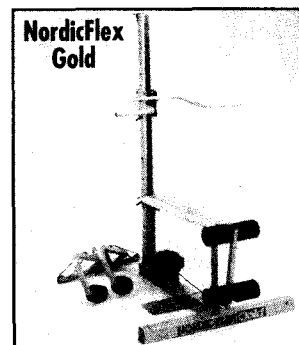
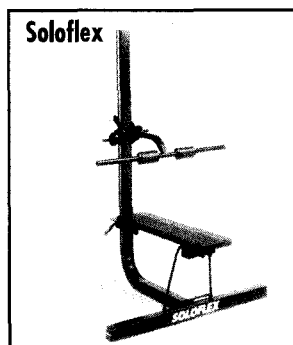
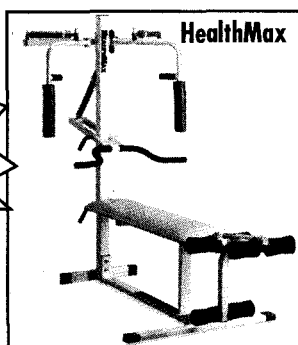
■ The parts of Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese life that encourage consumption are made difficult. The parts that encourage savings, investment, and deferred gratification are made easy and attractive—the way it was in America during the Second World War. The automobile market in Japan, for instance, is dominated by the *shaken* racket. The word *shaken* (pronounced "shah-ken" rather than like the English word "shaken") literally means "car ticket." In effect a *shaken* is a reinspection certificate that each car in Japan must have in order to remain legally on the road. The *shaken* policy originated during the infancy of the Japanese auto industry, when domestic cars were such unreliable rattletraps that bureaucrats thought it would be dangerous to let them on the road without constant safety checks. The public-safety rationale for reinspection obviously no longer applies. Nonetheless, after three years and then every two years thereafter Japanese drivers must take their cars in for a new *shaken*, and every two years they are saddled with hugely expensive "necessary" repairs. By the time a car is three or five years old, it can cost so many thousands of dollars to meet *shaken* standards that it makes sense to buy a new car, even though new cars themselves cost much more than the same models outside Japan. It

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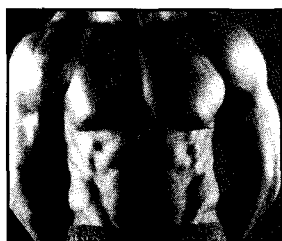
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is a way to turn the population into a captive market for producers.

■ The experience of the past generation has taught most Asian countries one dramatically clear lesson. They can't really go wrong by giving consumers too little, but they can easily go wrong by giving consumers too much. During the collapse of Japan's bubble economy, in 1991 and 1992, government officials said privately that an atmosphere of hardship was useful. Consumerism had been getting out of hand, and the bubble's collapse would have a tonic effect—without imposing real hardship on Japan or endangering Japan's long-term prospects. (Business-failure rates among Japanese manufacturing and construction firms were actually lower during the "crash" years of the early 1990s than they had been on average during the booming 1980s.)

In Korea the late 1980s were heady, pro-consumer years. The 1988 Seoul Olympics did for the country what the 1964 Tokyo Olympics had done for Japan. Anything seemed possible. In the fashionable parts of Seoul young women wore miniskirts and young men hung out all night. By 1990 the trade surplus was heading for the cellar, and the government had to fight back with a huge "anti-luxury" campaign. With economic growth slipping, the national tax office announced that "extravagance beyond one's reported means" would invite tax scrutiny. In effect this meant that anyone who bought a Mercury Sable, Lincoln Continental, Mercedes, or BMW could expect to be put through the tax wringer—a more serious threat in Korea than in some other countries, because so much business is off the books. Tariffs and other barriers had already raised the price of these cars to more than twice what they would cost in the United

States. That hadn't choked off sales, but the tax threat did; sales of the Sable virtually

stopped after the tax men stepped in.

Beyond all these economic calculations is a question of human nature. Anglo-American economic theory boils people down to their roles as consumers. Life experience, even in America, tells us that people have more in mind than getting the cheapest possible price and the highest possible wage. In certain circumstances people *like* to work hard, and save, and sacrifice themselves. Even though lottery winners typically don't have society's most desirable jobs, many of them decide to keep working even after they have cashed in. For years and years studies have shown that people who own small businesses behave in a self-exploitative, economically irrational way. They typically work longer hours than normal employees and earn less money than they could if they sold off their assets and invested the proceeds. Decisions like these are oddities in the Anglo-American economic world, where they are explained away with little theories about the "utility" of work. They are central to the Asian model of individual and collective life.

The Emperor's Legacy

IN the United States the effort to break up political power and the attempt to prevent the concentration of economic power have been seen as parallel steps toward liberty. The United States has a three-branch government because of fear that any one branch will become too dominant. The great reformers in the American tradition have generally risen to strike down excessive concentrations of power, from Jefferson (in his battle with Hamilton) to Andrew Jackson to Teddy Roosevelt to Ralph Nader to Ronald Reagan, in their varying ways. The people who have argued for centralizing and exercising power have generally had the excuse of wartime: Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson.

The deepest criticism of Japanese politics, made by the Dutch writer Karel van Wolferen, is that it lacks a definable center of political accountability. In the French or American system a President must finally make big choices, whereas in the Japanese system (as Van Wolferen explains it) the buck never stops anywhere.

The classic illustration of this problem is Japan's apparent paralysis during the first month after Iraq invaded Kuwait. The standard critique outside Japan was that the country was not doing its fair share. This entirely missed the point. Eventually Japan came up with quite a large sum of money, when it could have made the case for not contributing money at all. (The case would have been that it was foolish to go to war over this issue, and that if other countries had emulated Japan, by conserving their use of oil, they could have afforded to take a longer-term view.) Rather, the problem was that Japan seemed incapable of deciding what its position was. The Foreign Ministry announced one policy, the Finance Ministry disavowed it. The Prime Minister at the time, Toshiki Kaifu, was scheduled to go on a trip to the Middle East. Officials in the Foreign Ministry called the trip off. Feuding occurs in any government, but in this government not even the Prime Minister had the authority to resolve it.

Most other Asian societies do have a center of power. Indeed, this center has often been one dominant figure—a military strongman, as in Thailand, Indonesia, and often Korea; a statesman-leader, epitomized by Lee Kuan Yew, of Singapore; a sheer tyrant, as in North Korea and Burma; or a political boss, as in Malaysia and often Taiwan.

But whether the center of politics has been weak, as in Japan, or strong, as everywhere else, the political system as a whole has generally been authoritarian in Asia. Compared with any Western societies, and especially the Anglo-American system, Asian states have been less embarrassed and more explicit about the government's role in shaping society. The contrast is obviously sharper with America than with, say, France, which operates a Japanese-style *dirigiste* system without the social control. The Japanese system also resembles the most successful parts of government-business interaction in the United States, such as nuclear-weapons design and medical research. And it has analogues in many parts of Asia.

Some scholars contend that the heavy hand of government is the living legacy of Confucius. Anglo-American ideology warns against the abuse of power, and therefore tries to restrict Kings, Prime Ministers, and Presidents. The traditional Confucian "mandate of heaven" approach assumes that there will be an Emperor, asking only whether he exercises power well or poorly. Other scholars argue that such theories are merely cultural window-dressing, used by ruling groups to rationalize their hold on power.

Either way, the history of powerful governments in East Asia has made most governments both more competent and more legitimate when they work with businesses. They are more competent because the great prestige of the civil ser-

vice continues to attract the best-educated people in the country. For a variety of historical and social-status reasons, jobs in the government bureaucracy are still among the most desirable ones in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and other Confucian-influenced East Asian societies. Ambitious young graduates compete for positions in the Japanese Ministry of Finance or with the Korean Economic Planning Board the way ambitious young Americans compete for jobs at what we drolly call "investment" banks. (In 1990 Wasserstein Perella & Company, the mergers-and-acquisition house that was spun off from First Boston, received more than 30,000 applications for eight positions for college graduates.)

Today's Asian bureaucrats always complain that the thrill is gone, that they're not paid enough, that the long hours are driving out the real talent, and so on. For instance, early in 1992 the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japan's largest paper, said that the bureaucrats were groaning because they were about to be switched to a mandatory work week of five (rather than six) days, as part of Japan's efforts not to work so hard. Their grievance was that it would just mean more overtime during the regular week. Still, by international standards the Asian governments attract very skillful people into their ministries, and the ministers have both personal and institutional legitimacy.

A Fundamental Mistrust of the Market

THE dynamic view of economics is connected to the main spirit of American culture. People's lives should change! The future should be full of surprise!

This is not the spirit of most Asian societies, least of all Japan. The more familiar you become with Japanese customs, the more you are impressed with the virtue of doing the expected thing. (Letters to friends in Japanese, for instance, are always supposed to begin with comments about the weather.) The ideal Japanese life is one from which uncertainty has been removed as early as possible—by getting into the right school, by joining the right corporation. In 1989 pollsters asked citizens in seven countries to react to the statement "It is boring to live like other people." In America 69 percent of respondents agreed with the statement. In Japan only 25 percent did.

In a much broader sense, the Asian systems mistrust the uncertainty the market brings. The Asian and Anglo-American models both trust the market to decide which products will succeed or fail, which companies will beat which others. The Anglo-American model trusts political and economic markets with larger decisions as well: what is a good society, what is the right course for economic growth. The Asian model shrinks in horror from this possibility—as American parents would shrink from the idea that "the market," in the form of music videos, TV shows, and shopping malls, should teach their children what is right and wrong.

"The peoples of China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and other Confucian cultures deeply believe that the state ought to provide not only material wherewithal for its peoples but moral guidance," the Korean scholar Jung-en Woo wrote in 1991. "By and large, Westerners have no way to understand this point except to assert that the Asian countries suffer from a series of absences: no individual rights, no civil society, no Enlightenment, and thus a weak or absent liberalism." The individual may sometimes feel these lacks, but what is more important is that the system roll on.

According to most Western political theory—displayed in America at its extreme—the state has no legitimate power to say what makes a good life or a healthy economy. Everyone makes such choices for every day; the choice for the society emerges naturally from these decisions. If everyone wants to avoid taxes, taxes stay low. If people want to buy computers—or guns, or X-rated videos—that industry flourishes. The genius of this system is that it can use people's hungers and jealousies as a tool. It perfectly melds political and economic theories: political liberalism and economic *laissez-faire*, each of which says to leave the individual alone.

THE CLOSED FOREST

In memory of J. L. W.

Into the closed forest he went, with no
shirt, no watch, no wallet. Something
arranged it so that we weren't allowed
to watch him make the necessary gesture,
or ever know exactly how the space
that has no opening and no close was opened
and closed. And nothing was traded
for him—now there is only none
of him and more of the same. When we gathered,
one star for each of us briefly
wrung itself in the heavens, and then
was through. Through to something he went,
given roots for next of kin and earth
for earth, and no things except the spaces
between them. The shovel was handed round.
The rain brought altitudes down to him.
The globe seemed to shrink, what with our
demand for it to hold this gift.
Hold this gift, O heaven and earth.
Curse this page that knows his grave.
Nothing was traded for him in the closed forest.

—JESSICA HORNİK

The flaw is that the system suffers from "market failures," as economists and political scientists call them. Most people would be better off if the society invested more in schools or roads, but no one wants to vote for higher taxes. Everyone feels worse off when there are very wide social divisions, but no individual can make choices that narrow them.

In reality, the largest questions of right and wrong have been settled outside the market system—through religion, or family prejudice, or patriotism, or ethnic loyalty. But it is hard for the American-style system to argue that anything profitable is wrong if a willing seller and a willing buyer can agree on a price.

No government in Asia believes such things. Many individuals do, people being the same everywhere. But governments, with the possible exception of Hong Kong's, think that they, not individuals, should make the big decisions of right and wrong.

Time and again the visitor to Japan hears the phrases "confusion in the market" and "excessive competition." These are shorthand for the dangers of letting market forces get out of control. Each time these phrases come up, they raise intriguing translation problems. You can almost hear the interpreters saying the phrase as if it had quotation marks around it in English—"confusion in the market." There are no comparable terms in English, because the very concepts do not exist. What the Japanese and Koreans call "excessive" competition is what Western economics texts call "perfect" competition.

A deeper idea is the fundamental distinction between the market as a means and the market as an end in itself. Every healthy society knows that market incentives are necessary—real price competition, failure for products that don't make the grade, reward for innovation and enterprise. But only in the Western model is nothing besides the market necessary.

IN the early stages of their economic development, especially after the Second World War, Asian governments found it easy to set targets and plans. Above all else they had to catch up to the Western lead. Even now Asian systems reveal their faith that the goals should be chosen, rather than left to the market to decide. For example:

■ The Korean government has for decades divided up the work of national development among Korea's major companies. One group of companies must run the shipyards; another must collaborate with the Americans on semiconductor projects. In Taiwan the government requires companies to set aside a certain share of their sales revenue for research-and-development expenses. "Such measures would probably strike those South Koreans [and Taiwanese] who have absorbed the *political* ideals of the Anglo-Saxon model as flagrant violations of liberty," the economist Alice Amsden wrote in 1991.

Yet this is a very Anglo-Saxon view of democracy, not a universal one. It could just as well be argued that to leave in private hands investment decisions that have the potential to make a major impact on the welfare of society is itself inherently undemocratic.

■ The Anglo-American system tries to permit as many deals to be made as possible. In general, anything that's profitable should be legal, unless there's a compelling argument against it. The only loyalties that are not supposed to be for sale are within a family and to the country. More generally, friendship is supposed to operate outside the market system. But in Asia, and especially in Japan, *business* relationships are also supposed to operate outside the market, with loyalty to one's employer being more important than whether the relationship is immediately profitable or not. A Japanese scholar named Michio Morishima pointed out, in *Why Has Japan "Succeeded"?*, that

the "loyalty" market is opened only once in a lifetime to each individual, when he graduates from school or college. It is in this market that those who are able to provide loyalty meet those who are looking for it, their "lords."

■ During the Japanese stock market's long slide from 1989 to 1992, Japanese analysts contended that computer-program trading, introduced into the Tokyo stock market by American firms, was driving the market to daily lows. This strengthened the general feeling that the way to save the market was to restrict its flexibility—to make it more regulated again rather than to perfect its market forces. A Japanese report at the time said, "Deregulation of brokers' commissions in the US caused securities industry profits to fall and forced many firms into high-risk areas, such as aggressive mergers and acquisitions, a report by the Securities Industry Council charged." That is, letting too many decisions be made by the market created instability for all.

■ In the summer of 1991, when scandals were being revealed practically every day in the Japanese securities industry, a strange scandal was also unfolding in the earth-moving industry. Many of the competitors of the large Komatsu Corporation had been paying spies to provide secrets about Komatsu's master plan. The *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* reported, with a worried tone, that after the revelations "many [initially] thought confusion would reign in the construction industry." But, the paper said with relief, "it has been as calm as a lake in the morning—nary a ripple."

One of the reasons for this camaraderie is the fact that the Japan Construction Equipment Manufacturers Association, the "club" of the construction machinery industry, has just been organized. Until the "club" was organized, the industry was one huge price war. And, if the war went on, no one would make a profit and all would lose. Sensing that they were cutting each other's throats, the industry finally got together. So Komatsu didn't want to ruin all that effort.

Once the industry had formed its cartel, everyone felt secure again.

In 1955 the American novelist Richard Wright, the author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son*, went to Bandung, in newly independent Indonesia, for the historic conference of the non-aligned countries. This was the first real postcolonial muscle-flexing by Asian and African countries, led by the likes of Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Sukarno. As a black American, Wright had gone expecting to feel fellowship with those who had been controlled by white colonialists. His book about the conference, *The Color Curtain*, reflected his increasing puzzlement over, and estrangement from, the nonaligned policies. Although he did not put it this way, mistrust of the market was one of the traits that struck him most.

Still another and, to the Western mind, somewhat baffling trait emerged from these Asian responses. There seemed to be in their consciousness a kind of instinct (I can't find a better word!) toward hierarchy, toward social collectivities of an organic nature. In contrast to the Western feeling that education was an instrument to enable the individual to become free, to stand alone, the Asian felt that education was to bind men together.

The point for the moment is that one economic system assumes that it does not have to make the largest decisions about national purpose except when the system is being attacked from outside, in time of war. The other assumes that the state *always* has a role in guiding the nation. It is the clash between these visions, rather than the rightness or wrongness of either of them, that creates current problems.

Borders and Borderlessness

IN Western economics it's hard to come up with a theoretical reason for concentrating on national economic well-being. In the Asian model this is not a problem at all; it's taken for granted.

In daily life there is no shortage of nationalistic spirit in Western countries in general or the United States in particular. The flag waves constantly in American TV commercials. Crowds chant "USA" at international sporting events. But the principles that guide economic policy in the Anglo-American approach avoid the concept of national interest except in strictly military terms.

Most Anglo-American concepts in fact treat national economic interests as if they didn't really exist. Companies move their plants overseas, because that is what business logic says they should do. When it comes to politics, we're able to explain—but just barely—why one person should be inconvenienced for the good of all. I pay taxes because I'm part of a political community, even though in any given year I may pay more into the government than I directly get out. In the Anglo-American model there really isn't an econom-

ic community that justifies anyone's paying higher prices than he absolutely has to, or preferring to deal with someone from the same country rather than buying from overseas.

This outlook seems advanced and tolerant from the Western, liberal perspective. The world should be "borderless." In the summer of 1990 Roger Porter, who was then President Bush's chief domestic-policy adviser, gave a speech about America's outlook on world trade. Some people, he said, clung to the "old notion of nations, companies, and markets rigidly defined by national borders." But in this modern age, he concluded, such a notion was "outdated and dangerous." Porter was making a partisan argument in behalf of the Bush economic program, but his assumption that consciousness of nationality was "outdated and dangerous" reflected an educated Western view that has nothing to do with party.

In the United States discussions of corporate nationality have stuck mainly to the realm of theory. According to American assumptions, it is only natural for businesses to operate in rootless, global fashion. Therefore most Americans assume that denationalization has already occurred. American discussion on this point has been heavily influenced by the writings of Robert Reich, who was a lecturer at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government before he became Secretary of Labor in the Clinton Administration. Since the mid-1970s Reich has been proposing solutions to America's long-term economic problems, and his ideas about industrial policy (some of which were published in *The Atlantic Monthly*) have attracted a broad following. During the Bush years Reich wrote several influential articles in the *Harvard Business Review* and a subsequent book called *The Work of Nations*, which argued that corporations had grown past the point where they could sensibly be considered American or German or Japanese. With headquarters in one country, research centers in another, factories in yet other countries, and customers all around the world, Reich said, big diversified corporations could be loyal only to their own economic interests. Though Chrysler had its headquarters in Detroit and Matsushita was based in Osaka, neither would necessarily care about the government or labor force of its home country. Each would go wherever the money, the market, and the skilled work force drew it. In an age of global corporations, Reich concluded, a nation's well-being rises or falls with the skills of its workers. Therefore he vigorously advocated plans for improving American education and retraining American workers.

In practical terms, Reich said in a 1990 article titled "Who Is Us?," published in the *Harvard Business Review*, this blurring of corporate nationality meant that the U.S. government should not try to help American-owned companies solely because they were American-owned. The government owed its loyalty to citizens and workers within its borders, and companies from Europe, Japan, Mexico, or anywhere else might have more to offer the American work force. When the U.S. government gave contracts to Boeing, provided bailouts to Chrysler, or negotiated on behalf of Motorola or Zenith, by

Reich's analysis it might not have been helping American workers in any direct way. There was no telling where the companies would build the products that federal money was subsidizing. If Toyota was building plants in America and Chrysler was moving plants to Mexico, then Toyota should be considered at least as "American" as Chrysler.

As a theoretical matter, this proposition is sensible and appealing. Daily life abounds with cases that seem to confirm the point. American plants move to Mexico; Japanese and German plants open up in the United States. A large number of American commentators have embraced the "Who Is Us?" assumption, usually crediting Reich for having precisely defined the shift to a world in which corporations no longer have citizenship. Yet many of the specific illustrations on which this changed perspective is based turn out to be misleading. For instance:

■ In the summer of 1989 Reich published an article in *The New Republic* that provided a perfect illustration of the way a preference for home-based companies could backfire. U.S. trade negotiators, he said, had been hammering at the Japanese government to open the country's market to cellular phones made by Motorola. The irony, he said, was that in helping Motorola the government was doing little or nothing for American workers, because the phones Motorola wanted to sell were actually designed and made in Kuala Lumpur.

As a recent resident of Kuala Lumpur, I was surprised when I read this assertion, since I had known Motorola officials there and had never heard them say that they made cellular phones. As it turns out, they didn't. Motorola officials wrote immediately to *The New Republic* pointing out that the phones were made in the United States. James P. Caile, the director of marketing for Motorola's Cellular Subscriber Group, said in his letter that the telephones in question were designed and made in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Half a year later Reich published his seminal article, "Who Is Us?" Once again he used Motorola as a main illustration of the difference between the welfare of American companies and the welfare of American workers. Motorola, he said this time, "designs and makes many of its cellular telephones in Kuala Lumpur, while most of the Americans who make cellular telephone equipment in the United States for export to Japan happen to work for Japanese-owned companies."

After this article appeared, Richard W. Heimlich, Motorola's director of international strategy, wrote to the *Harvard Business Review*, pointing out once more that the phones were made in America, not Malaysia. Heimlich's letter also questioned Reich's claim that some "Japanese-owned companies" were building cellular phones in America and exporting them to Japan. Heimlich's letter was published in the *Harvard Business Review*; Reich replied in the magazine about cellular telephones thus: "One of those [Motorola's] Southeast Asian plants, by the way, does make parts for cellular telephones, according to industry sources."

Heimlich also wrote directly to Reich, offering to discuss

the issue further. Reich sent back an angry personal letter (which Motorola officials gave me when I asked for their side of the story), saying that he resented having his intellectual and academic integrity challenged. This letter referred Heimlich to a book by Edward Graham and Paul Krugman, which Reich said would substantiate his claims.

The book is called *Foreign Direct Investment in the United States*. I found when I looked at it that it says nothing at all about Motorola in Kuala Lumpur, and in a broader sense its argument is the opposite of Reich's. Its perspective is clearly internationalist, and one of its intentions is to rebut irrational American fears about the effects of foreign investment. Nevertheless the data Krugman and Graham examined show that corporate nationality does matter, and that it matters most for Japanese-owned firms.

At least in the United States, foreign-owned companies behave differently from American-owned firms in many ways. The biggest difference is that foreign-owned firms are far more likely to import their components from suppliers in the home country than to buy them locally. This difference is most pronounced for Japanese-owned firms. In December of 1991 Edward Graham published a comparison of Japanese-owned and American-owned manufacturing firms operating in the United States. He found that the Japanese-owned firms were less likely to produce goods for export from the United States, less likely to invest R&D funds in America—and four times as likely to import components, instead of manufacturing or buying them in the United States.

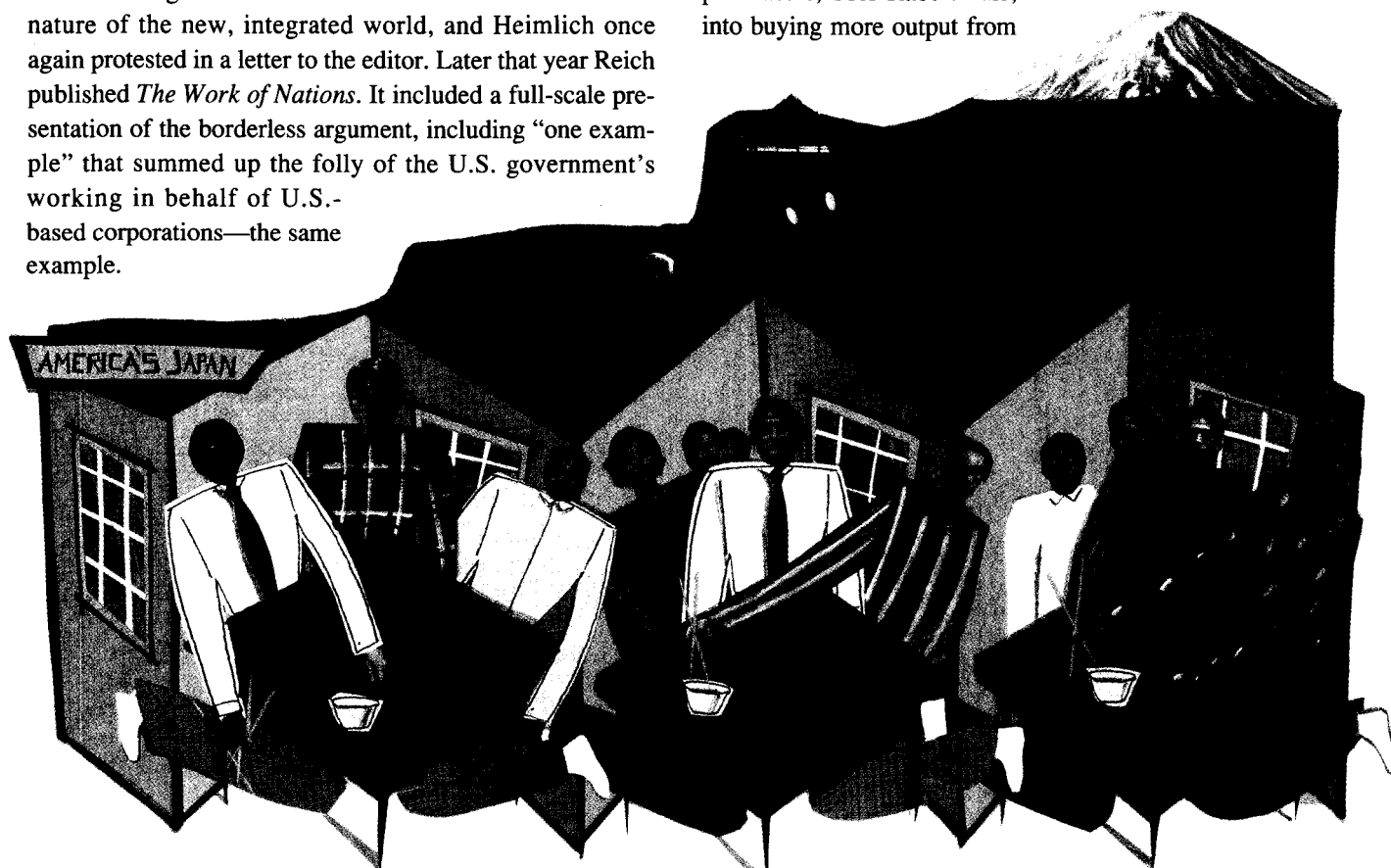
In the Winter, 1991, issue of *The American Prospect*, Reich once again used Motorola to illustrate the borderless nature of the new, integrated world, and Heimlich once again protested in a letter to the editor. Later that year Reich published *The Work of Nations*. It included a full-scale presentation of the borderless argument, including “one example” that summed up the folly of the U.S. government’s working in behalf of U.S.-based corporations—the same example.

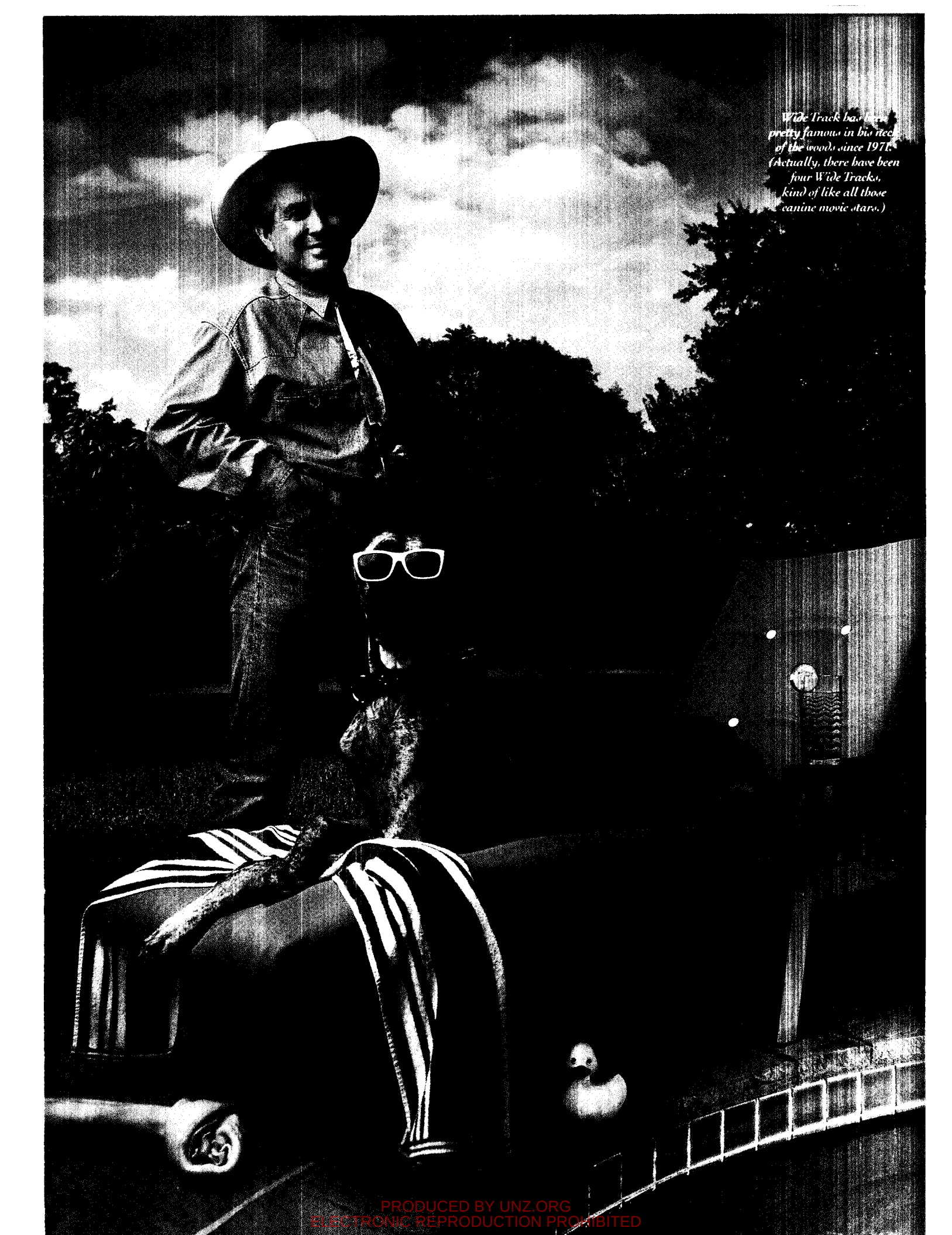
The power of the Motorola-in-Malaysia story depends on the assumption that it is one of many possible illustrations of a widespread trend. If there really were a large number of examples to choose from, it’s hard to explain why an author would have stuck with such a troublesome case. After I made numerous calls to the Labor Department to ask Reich why he seemed so attached to this one story, he replied through a press representative at the department that he had “seen no evidence to change his mind” about the Motorola case.

■ Last year, after he became Labor Secretary, Reich presented another perfect example of the “coming irrelevance of corporate nationality.” The example came in a memorandum he sent to President Bill Clinton on March 23, concerning trade and “competitiveness” strategies. “Our efforts should focus on opening foreign markets to American *exports*, rather than merely to U.S. products,” he said, sensibly. American exports would employ workers in America; mere “U.S. products,” for instance Coca-Cola sold overseas, might do little for America’s work force. Then came the example:

Japan’s agreement to purchase 20 per cent of its semiconductors from non-Japanese firms, for example, does not necessarily promote high-wage production in the United States. Close to 75 per cent of the chips which Japan purchased last year from U.S. firms were fabricated in Japan.

If true, this illustration would be even more powerful than the Motorola story in showing that corporations had transcended nationality. It would also mean that the semiconductor agreement had completely backfired, “forcing” Japanese purchasers, Brer Rabbit-like, into buying more output from





*Wide Track has been
pretty famous in his neck
of the woods since 1971.
(Actually, there have been
four Wide Tracks,
kind of like all those
canine movie stars.)*

When David McDavid became a Saturn retailer, his TV co-star took some time off to dig holes and get his belly scratched.

Like a lot of car dealers, David always believed his commercials just weren't any good without some kind of animal in them. So "Wide Track," his advertising, uh, *bark* person, has had the job, over the years, of representing all of David's different dealerships.

It was a good fit. David sold cars the way his Daddy taught him ("You trade 'em, swap 'em, and deal 'em"), and people kept coming in—to shake the dog's paw and maybe buy a car. David sold a lot of cars that way, but he didn't necessarily like the way it felt. It was just the way things in the car business had always seemed to work.



At the height of WideTrackmania, David used his dog just about everywhere—on license plates, on neon signs, even to hold up his trousers.

When Saturn got started, we asked a lot of people—car dealers *and* customers—if there was a better way to sell cars. And their answers made sense. What if we didn't use the hard sell? What if we tried harder to earn our customers' trust? What if we *advertised without gimmicks*?

After some skepticism ("Y'all couldn't sell picnic baskets to a hungry bear."), David decided to give Saturn a try. These days, we're happy to say, David wouldn't do business any other way, and ol' Wide Track is getting in some quality time with his bone collection. (He doesn't mind. He was never much of a publicity hound in the first place.)



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factories based in Japan. But this account of the agreement's effects also turns out to be inaccurate. According to figures collected by the U.S. Trade Representative's office, the percentage of such American-brand chips that were made in Japan was 30, not "close to 75." The semiconductor agreement had in fact achieved its stated purpose: most of the American chips sold in Japan were indeed designed and made in the United States.

■ In the same memorandum Reich gave another illustration of the borderless paradox. The U.S. government at that time was evaluating how to get involved in the emerging technologies of high-definition television. The main decisions lay with the Federal Communications Commission, which was to decide which transmission system, among several competing proposals, should be the standard for HDTV broadcasts within the United States. At the time Reich wrote his memo, three business consortia were vying to have their standards selected. One was led by the electronics makers Thomson, based in France, and Philips, based in Holland. The other two were all-American, in that the main partners in them were all U.S.-based institutions: an alliance between Zenith and AT&T, and a group led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Chicago firm General Instruments. (A fourth group, led by Japanese firms, dropped out of the competition when it became clear that its analog transmission system would lose in competition against the digital systems proposed by each of the other teams.)

In his memorandum to the President, Reich said that the government should look beyond strictly technical issues to see "which standard is likely to generate the greatest amount of high-wage production in the United States." He added,

(Interestingly, the only consortium which has pledged to develop and manufacture its high-definition televisions in the United States is the Dutch-French group [Phillips-Thompson-Sarnoff] *[sic]*; the AT&T-Zenith group will not do so, because Zenith is moving all its television production to Mexico.)

Like the Motorola and semiconductor examples, this one seemed to show the folly of helping American corporations. But as with the other examples, the real facts of this case undercut the "Who Is Us?" argument.

The French-Dutch consortium did indeed plan to do the

A **Asian history**
instructs many Ko-
reans, Chinese,
and Japanese that
economic competi-
tion is a form of
war. To be strong
is much better
than to be weak;
to give orders
is better than to
take them.

final assembly of its TV sets in America. Zenith planned to do its final assembly in Mexico. But this stage of the process boils down to "screwdriver jobs": final assembly is the bolting together of sophisticated, high-value components made somewhere else. Most of the value of an HDTV, which in turn means most of the sophisticated, high-wage jobs, would come from designing and producing those components. The most important and valuable components would be the many diverse semiconductors that would control the conversion and display of incoming digital signals. The high-resolution, large-scale picture tubes would be the next most valuable components. Where these specialized products were made, rather than where the sets were put together, would determine where the highest-value jobs from HDTV would end up.

If Thomson-Philips eventually leads the HDTV industry, the advanced semiconductors for its sets will almost certainly come from Thomson's factories in France. If the AT&T-Zenith group does, the semiconductors will come from AT&T in the United States. In a letter to Reich, Zenith's chairman, Jerry K. Pearlman, had emphasized that since the "American" consortium would make its advanced components in the United States, it would produce more highly skilled jobs for Americans than the European consortium would.

Pearlman is hardly an impartial observer, but his account of HDTV supply patterns conforms to most other accounts in the industry. It is "interesting," as Reich had said in his memorandum to the President, to speculate that the foreign-based consortium would create more high-value jobs within the United States, but this is probably not the reality. Most other evidence, both anecdotal and analytic, confirms the antique-seeming idea that corporations do their most valuable work in the country where they are based.

Them Against Us

A NGLO-AMERICAN theory instructs Westerners that economics is a "positive-sum game," from which all can emerge as winners. Asian history instructs many Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, and others that economic competition is a form of war. To be strong is much better than to be weak; to give orders is better than to take them. By this logic the way to be strong, to give orders, to have independence and control—to win—is to keep in mind the difference between us and them. This perspective comes naturally to Koreans when thinking about Japan, or to Canadians when thinking about the United States, or to Chinese or Japanese when thinking about what the Europeans did to their nations. It does not come naturally to Americans.

But, again, it comes naturally in the Asian system. There are more examples from Japan than from the other countries, because Japan got there first; Korea, for instance, would love to be just as nationalistic, but under the current balance of power in Asian economies it doesn't have a chance.



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Here are a few ways in which Asian economies are more nationalistic than ours.

■ *Intra-industry trade.* Theory seems to call for international trade to become more specialized by region as time goes on. Wine and cheese will come from France, magazine editors from England, cars from Japan, wool from New Zealand, and vodka from the Russian potato lands. Each country will develop its own national skill.

In fact just the opposite occurs. Since the end of the Second World War the fastest-growing type of international trade has been “intra-industry” trade. German car companies like Mercedes, Audi, and BMW make cars that are attractive to customers in France, Japan, and America—but some people in Germany want non-German cars like Ferraris, Toyotas, Volvos, and Fords. Germany also has a very active auto-parts industry. It sells to other auto makers around the world, and its own auto makers buy parts from non-German makers, notably in the United States.

The result is that Germany actively sells automobiles and auto parts to the rest of the world—and actively buys the same things. This pattern, of sales *and* purchases within an industry, is intra-industry trade. It is measured on a scale that runs from zero to 100. An intra-industry trade rate of zero means that trade in a certain industry all runs one way: a country only sells or only buys a certain product. (For instance, Saudi Arabia’s trade rate for oil sales would be zero.) A rate of 100 means that a country sells exactly as much of a certain product as it buys.

Countries that have very low intra-industry trade rates are typically Third World countries or others with unbalanced economies. The classic banana republic would sell only raw materials and would import nearly all the machinery it used. The intra-industry trade rate in most developed countries is high and steadily rising. Depending on the industry, countries in Western Europe have recently had intra-industry trade rates in the low 60s through the low 80s. The U.S. rates are slightly lower than the European ones, which is not surprising, since the U.S. economy is bigger and less influenced by foreign trade.

Japan does not fit this pattern. First, its overall rate has been unusually low. Edward Lincoln, of the Brookings Institution, in his 1990 book *Japan’s Unequal Trade*, calculated that Japan’s overall rate was 25, which was one third the overall rate for France and far below that of any other industrial power. This means in practice that the Japanese economy buys only the goods it simply cannot make: fuel, food, raw materials, and certain advanced products (notably airplanes) in which its industries cannot yet compete.

Second, Japan’s rate has rarely risen. For the rest of the developed world intra-industry trade has been the main engine of trade growth during the postwar years. Countries started with different rates, but all the rates went up. Japan’s stayed low through most of the postwar era and, according to Edward Lincoln, rose only modestly in the late 1980s, when

Japanese manufacturers moved some of their plants overseas. It is not necessary to say that Japan’s low rate is wise, unwise, or some mixture: its effect is to divide the world into “us” and “them” production zones, and to keep as many industries as possible in the hands of “us.”

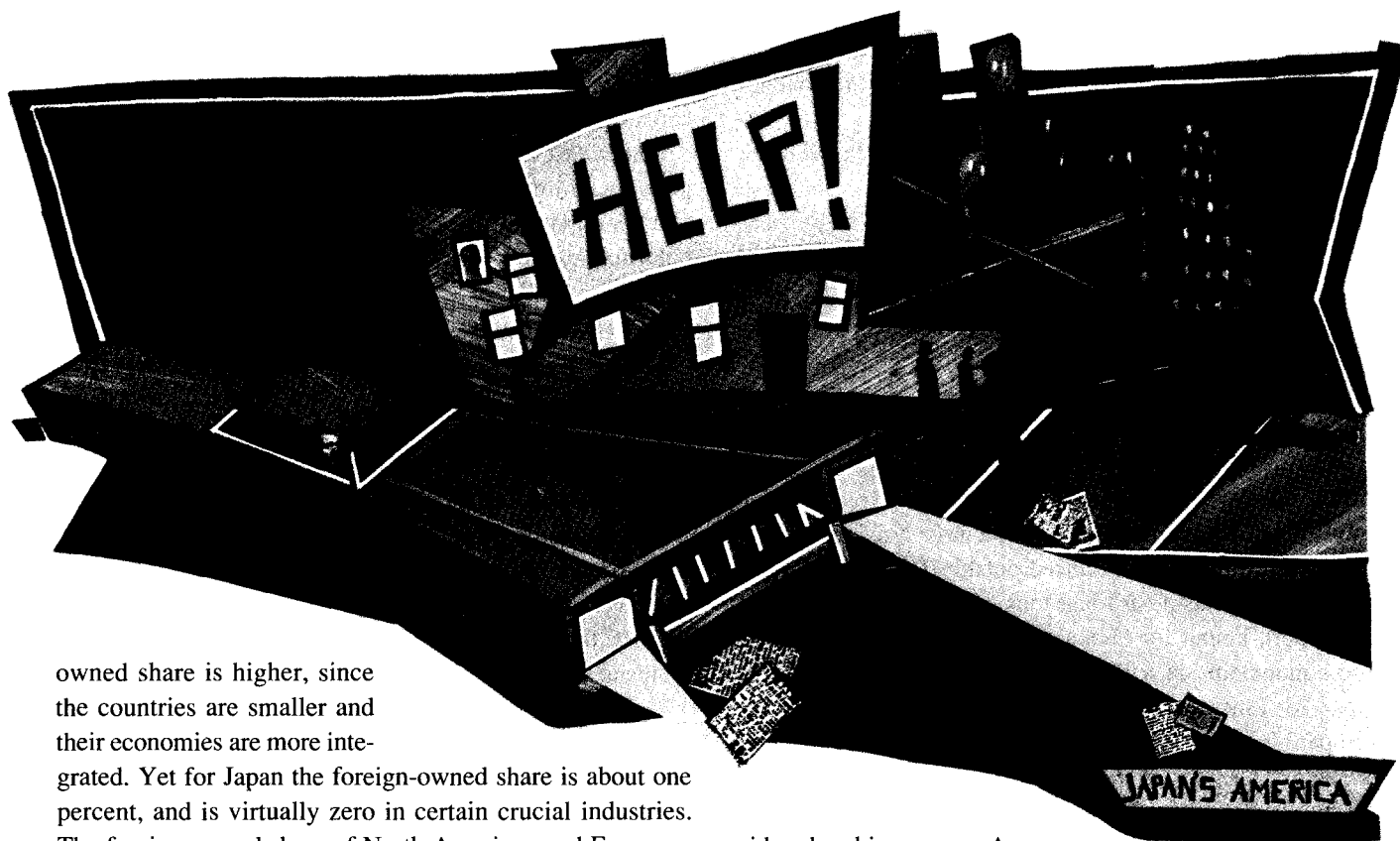
■ *Management.* The board members of U.S. companies are still mainly American white men, but there are exceptions. For instance, in May of 1992 *The Wall Street Journal* provided a long list of executives of major American corporations who were born outside the United States. The computer industry is full of people who started in other countries. The magazine world is full of the English.

Most Asian countries have a far more nationality-conscious policy. It would be inconceivable for a non-Korean to run one of the major Korean enterprises. Although it is difficult to find reliable figures for the number of non-Japanese who serve on the boards of directors of major Japanese companies (Japan’s big-business federation, the Keidanren, says it has “no information” on this subject), the number, as best I can determine, is in the single digits. Japanese firms doing business around the world had a much higher proportion of Japanese managers than American firms had of Americans, or European firms had of their own nationalities. At the end of 1991 the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* surveyed Japanese-owned companies in America. It concluded, “Only about 5 percent of executives are American and delegation of authority to local companies just isn’t happening.”

■ *Incoming investment.* During the late 1980s Americans debated about the higher levels of foreign investment coming into their country, and whether it was racist to be concerned about investment from Japan rather than, say, from Holland. One answer to this question is that there was more of it from Japan. During the late 1980s Japanese investors overtook the Dutch to hold the second largest amount of U.S. assets. (The leading holders were the British.) In terms of new investments the Japanese were far ahead of everyone else in the late 1980s.

The real reason for the complaint about Japanese investment was that European investment did not seem profoundly foreign. European-owned companies in America were mainly run by Americans. Japanese-owned companies were to a much larger extent run by Japanese. During the 1988 campaign Michael Dukakis made a famous gaffe by denouncing foreign ownership at an auto-parts factory that turned out to be owned by Italian interests. The fact that on his visit he didn’t notice that it was foreign-owned pointed up the underlying message: he would never have made that error with Mitsubishi.

Moreover, the British and Dutch economies were wide open for American investment. Japan’s economy was not. Indeed, the share of Japan’s economy that is owned by foreigners is the nation’s most distinctive economic trait—because it is so tiny. Systems for measuring foreign ownership vary, but approximately 10 percent of the U.S. economy is now foreign-owned. For most European nations the foreign-



owned share is higher, since the countries are smaller and their economies are more integrated. Yet for Japan the foreign-owned share is about one percent, and is virtually zero in certain crucial industries. The foreign-owned share of North American and European economies has been steadily rising. The foreign-owned share of Japan's economy has fallen for several years—despite the collapse of prices on the Japanese stock market in the early 1990s, which should theoretically have attracted bargain hunters from overseas.

For the first few decades after the Second World War, Japanese laws flatly prohibited foreigners from buying Japanese companies. The handful of foreign companies that are well established in Japan—Coca-Cola, IBM—are the exceptions that prove the rule. For various reasons they were able to grandfather themselves into the system. Their success is usually cited as proof that anyone who tries hard enough can find a way into the Japanese system. But most other companies were forbidden to do the same thing thirty or forty years ago, when it would have been cheap—and they can't afford to do it now.

Dennis Encarnation, of the Harvard Business School, has pointed out that when Japanese enterprises invest in plants in Europe or North America, they almost always buy a controlling interest—100 percent if possible, 51 percent at least. When foreigners have bought shares of Japanese firms, they have almost always ended up as minority owners, and often receive no seats on the board of directors.

■ **Technology.** There is a final point to emphasize about a nationality-conscious business policy: it goes with an aversion to relying on foreigners. This desire for autarky is completely understandable in historical and psychological terms, although it is considered irrational in the realm of economics.

When Japan suddenly became industrialized, in the opening decades of this century, it lost the ability to feed its own people from its own soil. When its leaders and generals con-

sidered making war on America, in the 1930s, what drove them was the fear that they would run out of oil. One nightmare they faced was that their shipping would be cut off and they could be starved out. Today is a very different time—supplier cartels can be broken, as with OPEC; people who have money, as Japan does, can find food to buy. Yet much the same mentality runs through many Japanese—and other Asian—approaches to technology. In ways that no economic theory can fully explain, the goal of national policy is to bring control of the technology into Japanese (or Korean, or Chinese) hands—even if this is irrational, even if it violates the spirit of the borderless world.

Japanese corporations do practice a form of conventional economic competition, but all within their own borders. This is known as the “one-set” philosophy: each big company makes a set of products that includes one of each kind. Each beer maker produces a draft beer, a “dry” beer, a lager, and so on; each electronics company tries to produce a full range of radios, TVs, and fax machines. Successful Japanese students are expected to get top marks in every subject. Economists say that specializing in everything is in principle not possible. But in practice the urge to be on top in *every* field, rather than concentrating on some and leaving the rest to competitors, is a stronger impulse in Japanese society than in most others.

Americans may complain about the decline of their steel and semiconductor industries—that is, areas where the United States once enjoyed a lead and has had to watch factories shut their doors. But few Americans really think it is a problem if we have to buy our entire supply of CD players from overseas. The United States has no government project under way to create a domestic fax-machine industry, and

when government guidance is proposed—for semiconductors, HDTVs, and superconductors—it is always controversial. The Japanese assumption is very different. In 1988, after an agricultural-trade conference in Montreal, a Japanese negotiator spoke to a Canadian colleague. “You know what really makes Japan unusual?” he said. “We are the only major industrial power that is not also a food exporter. If we could improve the productivity of our rice farming by fifteen percent a year, in eight years we would be competitive with California.” Not even Japan’s least competitive industry, agriculture, should be conceded to foreign competition.

The Japanese emphasis on the country’s “unique” capacity for high-quality manufacturing provides an argument for national self-sufficiency. In 1985 the most disastrous crash in Japanese air history occurred outside Tokyo. A Boeing 747 owned by Japan Air Lines took off from Tokyo’s Haneda Airport, bound for Osaka. Shortly afterward it crashed into a mountainside, killing 520 passengers. Officials from Japan Air Lines visited the bereaved families to express the company’s contrition. On investigation it proved that the principal cause of the crash was a faulty repair job carried out by Boeing engineers, which had left one of the plane’s pressure bulkheads in a weakened state.

Many lessons might be drawn from the catastrophe. The high death toll was in part an indictment of bureaucratic infighting within Japan’s Self-Defense Force, which squabbled for hours over which branch would do what in going to aid the victims. Autopsies showed that many people had survived the crash but died later of exposure or injuries; they could have been saved with a faster response. Nonetheless the crash was taken in Japan as a symbol of the across-the-board shoddiness of American equipment; over the next few years I heard it mentioned in that context dozens of times.

I moved to Japan half a year after the JAL crash, and less than a month after the space shuttle *Challenger* blew up shortly after being launched. Several times during the next year I heard quite similar responses from Japanese: if we had done it, it wouldn’t have happened. A Canadian friend was at the Japanese space center that day and recalls the air of *schadenfreude*. The unspoken mood was, what can you expect? This gloating was unwarranted on the part of Japanese quality-control experts, since their country’s own H-2 rocket, usually described in the press as the first “pure” Japanese aerospace project, kept blowing up on the launch pad in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

But the general perception of shoddy American production perfectly reinforces the Japanese view of the JAL crash and the *Challenger* explosion. Early in 1992, when the speaker of the Japanese House complained about American work habits, a *Wall Street Journal* story quoted a Japanese pollster, Takayoshi Miyagawa, as saying that the comment “represents a general perception of Japanese people on the quality of American labor.” The result of the JAL crash and similar U.S.-made catastrophes, he said, is that “the Japanese

people think we should make by ourselves whatever concerns human life.”

Sometimes the strategy of saving lives by restricting imports backfires. In 1988 Japan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare coordinated a drive by the country’s three largest vaccine-making companies to produce an alternative to an American vaccine that had not been approved for sale in Japan. The American vaccine, produced by the Merck Corporation, had the trademarked name of MMR and was used to protect children against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) with one inoculation. Merck’s vaccine was extremely safe; after it had been used on more than 100 million children, no cases of serious side effects had been confirmed. Japanese doctors at the time administered three separate shots for the three diseases. To promote the growth of Japan’s pharmaceutical industry, and to avoid using Merck’s product, the Japanese government asked each of the three companies to produce its best vaccine for one of the diseases covered by MMR. These the government combined into a new vaccine, which it also called MMR. When the vaccine was ready, in early 1989, the Ministry of Health and Welfare began a mandatory nationwide inoculation program for children. “Rather than use foreign products, we wanted Japanese products because they are of better quality,” an official of Japan’s Association of Biologicals Manufacturers told Leslie Helm, who reported the story in the *Los Angeles Times*.

In fact Japan’s MMR was of much worse quality than the foreign alternatives. Based on the safety record of Merck’s MMR and similar foreign vaccines, the Ministry of Health and Welfare had expected that its vaccine would produce side effects in no more than one case per 100,000 inoculations—but the incidence of side effects was at least 100 times as great as predicted. The most serious side effects were meningitis and encephalitis, which killed some children and left others paralyzed or brain-damaged. By the end of 1989 the government had made the Japanese MMR vaccine optional rather than mandatory, but it left the vaccine on the market while the remaining stocks were used up and did not approve the safer Merck product for sale in Japan. (Japanese doctors have now returned to giving separate immunizations for the three diseases.)

The preferences of such a system cannot be explained by a desire to save lives—or to protect consumers. By modern Western standards such preferences seem illogical and self-defeating at best, brutally misguided at worst. Yet they are in keeping with the belief, widespread outside the English-speaking world, that inconvenience to consumers is less damaging in the long run than weakness of a nation’s productive base. The fastest-growing modern economies, in East Asia, reflect this view. Like it or not, we live in the world that Asian success stories have shaped. We need to figure out how to compete in it. ♣

This is the last of three articles.

Blue Skies

by ERIN MCGRAW

Constance and Ray had been married for six years, and more than five of them had been shaky. Now Ray seemed to have turned a corner, but Constance couldn't shake her premonitions of disaster

CONSTANCE didn't know why she was watching Ray. He came home right after work; he ate with good appetite. He set out a garden as a thank-you gift to her for staying through the first angry months he was on the wagon. Weekends he helped her dig.

The garden was the first she'd had since she'd run off to marry him, and even in their strangled backyard soil, packed too hard and seamed with pebbles and old mortar, she was able to grow plants she'd never before had any success with. Pea plants launched themselves against the back fence, and the strawberry runners formed a solid carpet over the ground, dense as matting. Now she had ambitions for corn, too, if she could get Ray to till the space on the west side of the house.

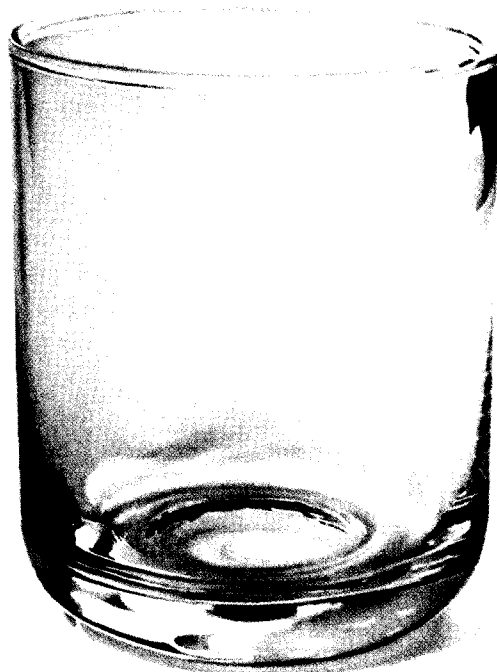
After dinner, when she watered, Ray leaned on a hoe and talked to her. These days he loved to talk. He told her about work, hauling onions down to Modesto or Vacaville; troubles with the shipments; jokes he'd heard on his CB. He met her eye and sang her the corny country songs he listened to all day. "Send me the pillow that you dream on, so darlin', I can dream on it too," he yodeled while she tugged at a broadleaf root as thick as his finger.

Still, she couldn't help

herself. She watched him while he dressed in the mornings, the way he tiptoed to keep from waking her. She watched him nap on Sunday afternoons and stooped to inhale his breath, sour from 7UP and coffee. She began to prowl through the house, checking behind the towels and in the garage. Three years before, when he'd been arrested for DUI in Nashville, she'd found bottles stashed in the garment bag with his wedding suit. Now his eyes were clear and she found no bottles at all, but she only looked harder.

She was ashamed of what she was doing, and prayed to overcome the demons of doubt. She hated to think how hurt Ray would be if he knew that only last week she had quietly driven to the truck yard and tailed him all the way home—where he drove directly, observing posted speed limits and signaling well in advance of his turns. When Constance pulled into the driveway, he turned, delighted. "Were you right behind me, angel? I didn't even see you!"

Angel. It was something Ray had picked up from his country songs. She'd already told him she didn't like it, but in the mornings, before he went to work, he would come up behind her and cradle her shoulders in his ropy arms. "My angel of light. My guardian angel."



"Your angel needs to know what you want for dinner," she said one morning in June. He'd been sober almost six months.

"Strawberries," he said, sliding his hands down her sides. "Our harvest."

"You wanted our harvest night before last, to put on your ice cream. You expect more than that poor garden can put out."

"If you don't have expectations, nothing can live up to them," he said, bending to gnaw at the top of her ear.

Constance ducked away and planned a pot roast. She had read somewhere that nutrition was important to sobriety, and ever since she'd been packing Ray's lunch with extra sandwiches and bananas.

She dawdled, lingering until Ray kissed her good-bye and strode whistling out the door. Then she hurried into the bedroom and stood in front of the closet, pressing her face against every one of his shirts in turn, checking for the stale cigarette smell that would mean he had been to a bar. She didn't stop until she got to his best white shirt, which she knew good and well he hadn't worn since their neighbor Judy's wedding.

Leaning into the closet, her face pressed against the stiff cloth, Constance began to cry. She and Ray had been married six years, and more than five of them had been grubby and desperate, begging landlords for extensions and facing dinners of macaroni and potatoes. For the six months they had lived in Rushdale, Ray hadn't missed a day of work, and Constance felt as if she'd been slammed onto dry land after a long storm. But she couldn't forget the feeling of treacherous swells beneath her feet.

AT ten that morning, after Constance had washed the breakfast dishes and made up the bed, Ray called. He had never called her from work before, and his voice sounded so hushed and thin that she didn't immediately recognize it.

"Hi, angel. You already cleaned those strawberries?"

"What's wrong?"

"Not a thing in the world. Nothin' but blue skies. You started dinner already?"

"I haven't even washed my face yet."

"What do you say I take you out tonight? Wine you and dine you."

"What are you saying, Ray?" Constance said, alarmed now, and craning over the phone as if she could grab hold of him that way.

He giggled. "Just a figure of speech. Come on, girl. Take today off and have a milk bath. We can have a date. Let me take you out to dinner, and this weekend I'll make a trellis for your peas. They're a mess."

Constance shook her head. "Would you like me to give you a list of every bill we haven't paid off?"

"The Lord never meant us to use all our money just to pay bills."

"How would you know? You haven't been in a church in twenty years," she said.

"Heard it on the radio. See you tonight, dollface."

A minute after he hung up, Constance realized that she was panting like a dog; the old nauseating dread was rolling in her stomach. She slipped on her shoes and gathered the spade and weeder and bucket she kept next to the back door.

It had been a damp morning, and the sun was late in burning off the fog, so the soil in the bed was still moist and the air smelled sweet. Arrested, she stared at the garden as if she'd never seen it before—the tender nests of lettuce, the sprays of pink and white blossoms on the peas. The air was hot already, stitched with the cries of mockingbirds drawn to the rich, rotted strawberries. She dropped to her knees and brushed her cheek with a hairy zucchini leaf. She ate the leaf right off the vine, snapping its tough stem between her front teeth and chewing, even though the bitter, grassy taste made her eyes water. Her thigh grazed the soft pepper leaves, just unfurling—they were Ray's favorite, and she had already promised to make pepper stew with the first crop. She touched the dark leaf with the tips of her fingers. If he started to drink again, she would plow every one of them under.

TO her relief, Ray took Constance to The Door of Italy, a modest restaurant that catered to families, and he waved away the waitress who asked if they would like wine. All around them couples were nodding and murmuring. "Judy says to watch out for whiteflies on the tomatoes. She says whiteflies are the big killer around here," Constance said, while Ray whistled softly into the menu. "I check the plants, but I don't know what else to do."

Ray smiled and reached across the table to hold her hand. "You keep a good eye on things."

"I'm just trying for damage containment. The zucchini vines are already a yard long."

"I like to see you happy," Ray said.

"I'm a lark," Constance muttered, watching his thumb scrape over her knuckles.

"You deserve it, after all the rough times."

"Where do you suppose that waitress is? I'm ready for my salad."

"What's wrong, angel?"

Constance pulled back her hand. "I'm happy. I sing all day. I just don't like to push my luck."

"The way I figure, you're owed plus overtime." He cleared his throat. "I have some news," he said. He was watching, waiting for her to smile, but Constance felt dread washing over her. "You'll never believe who came to see me today: Monty George."



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*Occasionally, beauty is in the hand
of the beholder.*

Constance put down her glass. "Christ almighty."

"No, wait," Ray chuckled. "It was great—he snuck into my cab. He was waiting there for me when I signed out of the office. He started laughing so hard when he saw the look on my face he about fell out."

"How did he know where you were?" Constance asked.

"He happened to be in town, and he saw me driving out last week, so he waited until he could catch me."

"He just happened to be in Rushdale? Just looking for life to happen in Rushdale, California?"

"He's changed. He's a distributor for AgPro. He was in town with a new line."

"Monty has become a salesman?"

"I told you, he's changed."

Constance tried to drink her water, but her throat was hard and tight. Ray had never been able to lie to her, though he'd tried when he was drinking. She'd known from the second he phoned that morning. But for all the time spent sniffing Ray's shirts, she was still caught unawares. She could never have sniffed out Monty.

"—and damn if he doesn't tell me that he's sober too!" Ray was saying. "He's got me beat by thirteen months. The day the cop had to tell him what city he was in, he began to consider adjustments." Ray whooped and slapped his thigh.

"What does he want?"

Ray wiped his eyes. "He wants to see you, for one thing. He asked about you right off."

"Don't tell me that Monty George snuck into your truck because he wanted to know about me."

"You'll be surprised when you see him. He said he had an idea, but he didn't want to talk about it unless you were there too. He still talks the same way. 'Any partnership,' he said, 'requires full communication.'"

Constance was rolling shreds of her bread into pellets. "What do you suppose he meant by that?"

"I think he has an idea, angel," Ray said, bending swiftly to kiss her hand and then gesturing to the waitress.

MONTY dated back to Cleveland, and the long-distance refrigeration company that had work for Ray one week out of three. Constance and Ray had been married just over a year, long enough for their positions to harden; their arguing was daily and mean. Monty lived downstairs, and knocked on the door their first morning there. Constance was twenty-two, still capable of hope. She let him in.

He was a tiny man, half a head shorter than she. By the summer, when she would awaken to find him watching their television, she would come to know his plump shoulders, as undeveloped as a boy's, and the fragile length of his shin. But on this first, icy day all she noticed was the sheen on his skin, as if it held too much blood.

"So you're the new footsteps," he said. "You walk a lot—did anyone ever tell you that?"

It was a Sunday, and Ray was still in bed, snoring through slack lips. "My husband is in the other room," she said. "We came yesterday, from Indiana."

Monty pushed past her, glancing into the galley, where she had piled their three boxes of dishes and pots, and pausing at the sheet she had tacked to the ceiling to separate the bed from the rest of the room. "Are you going to be making breakfast soon?" he said. "I'd like to know what your schedule is, as long as I'm going to be hearing you anyway. Myself, I'm an early bird. Hate to miss the dawn." He scooted back to Constance and rested his pudgy hand on her wrist. "You never know when life is going to happen."

Constance heard Ray swing his feet to the floor, as if on cue, and shamle out from behind the sheet, blinking into the light like a bear. "Think you could get it any colder in here, Constance?" he said. He held the blanket around him for a robe, and she could smell his breath from where she stood.

"This is Monty. He lives downstairs."

Ray squinted at him. "You're the little guy who watched me pull the mattress up the stairs."

"I'm not much help," Monty shrugged. "Best to stay out of the way. Why don't you come on down to my place? I've got something that can warm you up." He winked.

Ray lifted his head then and looked sharply at Monty. "I believe I'll do that," he said. "Neighborly."

"Neighborly," Monty repeated, and bowed to him, his arms at his sides and his tight body creasing at the waist.

Constance said, "I believe I'll stay. I won't be comfortable until things are tidy." But Ray and Monty were bowing toward each other like dolls, grinning and repeating, "I will. I believe I'll do that, neighbor." After they went downstairs, she made a point of walking across the apartment as many times as she could, stamping her feet over the place where she thought Monty's sofa might be.

Ray didn't come home until after nine that night. Constance had lined the kitchen cupboard and put all the dishes away, hung and folded her clothes. At seven she heated up a pot of soup, and at seven-thirty she dumped the remainder down the drain and scrubbed and put away the pot and her bowl and spoon. When Ray came in, she was reading an article about cupcakes in a year-old *Woman's Day* she'd found in the closet.

"Do you know what you sound like from downstairs?" he asked her from the doorway.

"What if you get called to work tomorrow?" she said.

Ray minced across the floor, lifting his knees waist-high on each step and furiously drumming his feet when he reached the middle of the room. "You sound just like that. A hundred-pound mouse."

"The dispatcher could call, you know. They fill most of their replacements on Monday."

"Stop mousing at me, woman," he said, and giggled.

"We'll go to Cleveland," she mimicked. "Lots of trucking firms there. You'll see—it was just a run of bad luck."

"Squeak, squeak, squeak. Sorry, Constance, but I can't hear you over all the mice in here."

"It doesn't take you long, does it?" she said.

"I have the gift for making friends."

"If you could just *hear* yourself."

Ray's expression softened and then collapsed into tragic remorse; he dropped his hands and sat on the box beside him, which crumpled under his weight. Looking up at her from the floor, he said, "It's not fair, is it? You were up here all day by yourself, putting things away. I got to have fun while you were putting things away."

"It's all right," Constance said. "I got a lot done."

"No, it's not all right. You're my wife. You shouldn't have to be alone all day. Tomorrow I'll tell Monty to come up here."

"Ray, for God's sake."

He stood up and waved his hands; he would hear no more. "And if we see any mice," he said before he pulled down the sheet to the alcove, "we'll shoot them."

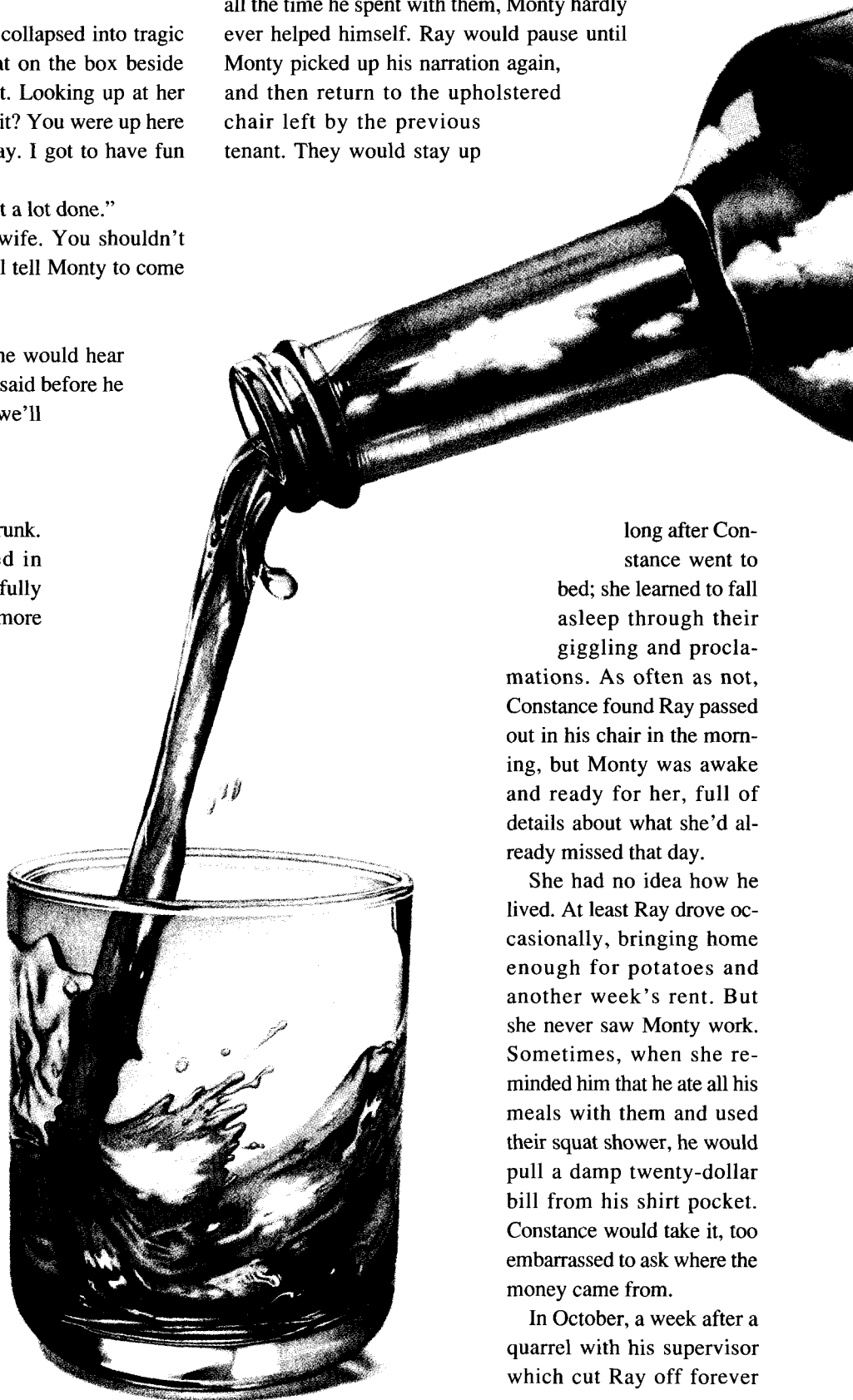
LIKE Ray, Monty was a happy drunk. In the whole year they lived in Cleveland, Constance never saw him fully sober, but the more Monty drank, the more courtly he became, and the more apt to share his delight over a sunrise, new irises in the spring, Constance's hamburger casserole. When she brought in clean laundry, he buried his face in it and cried, "Just smell! Clean sheets!" He'd pound his tiny fists against the wall.

Constance didn't encourage him, but still Monty marveled at every counter she sponged, every potato she baked. Eventually her impatience and embarrassment dropped away, and she found herself pointing out bellying clouds just so she could watch how his ears reddened when he was excited. When she prepared dinner, he hoisted himself onto the narrow counter and narrated her actions.

"She's chopping up the

onions now; her knife's a blur. She goes so fast she doesn't have a chance to cry. Now she's checking the bowl with the bread dough, seeing how it's rising. It's rising like the sun. And now she's back to the cutting board with more onions."

From the outer room Ray would wander in, rummage in the tiny refrigerator, and pull out two cans. In all the time he spent with them, Monty hardly ever helped himself. Ray would pause until Monty picked up his narration again, and then return to the upholstered chair left by the previous tenant. They would stay up



long after Constance went to bed; she learned to fall asleep through their giggling and proclamations. As often as not, Constance found Ray passed out in his chair in the morning, but Monty was awake and ready for her, full of details about what she'd already missed that day.

She had no idea how he lived. At least Ray drove occasionally, bringing home enough for potatoes and another week's rent. But she never saw Monty work. Sometimes, when she reminded him that he ate all his meals with them and used their squat shower, he would pull a damp twenty-dollar bill from his shirt pocket. Constance would take it, too embarrassed to ask where the money came from.

In October, a week after a quarrel with his supervisor which cut Ray off forever

from Cleveland Refrigerated Hauling, Constance snapped awake in the middle of the night. The towel over the window had slipped, and the grayish moonlight was bright enough to read by. As she stood on the bed to rehang the towel, she heard something from the outer room. It was a dim, blurred sound, and she realized now that it had been going on for some time. Constance steadied herself against the window and listened. This was nothing like Ray and Monty's usual uproar, the nights they spent singing chorus after chorus of "Blue Skies." The sound was murmurous and steady as a pulse.

She edged off the bed next to the sheet, pulling it aside just enough to see into the outer room. Ray and Monty were sitting on the floor, their legs crossed. A candle burned between them with thick braids of wax collapsing down its sides. The wick had sunk so that it gave off almost no light, and she couldn't see Ray's expression, but Monty's, just over the flame, was rapt, his little pie-shaped face wet and shining. "Full moon," he said. "Full moon. Fill up my pockets."

"Full moon, full moon. Fill up my pockets," Ray said, joining him. He was swaying slightly.

Constance could see that her pots and bowls were on the floor around the two men, even the good cut-glass bowl that she had forbidden Ray ever to touch. "What are you *doing*?" she cried, and Ray's voice faltered when he looked up. Monty kept chanting, glancing away from the candle only long enough to nod at her.

"Hey, Constance. You ought to like this. We are bringing home the bacon," Ray said, swallowing a belch.

"Hush," Monty said serenely. "We're almost finished. Full moon, full moon, fill up my pockets."

Constance leaned against the wall and watched while Monty and her husband chanted, surrounded by open bowls. Their voices swelled and subsided like waves. "Ray, for God's sake," she said.

Monty rose to his feet and raised his palms toward the ceiling. "Full moon!" he cried. "Full moon! Fill up my pockets! Fill! Fill! Fill!"

Ray stood too, and gazed at the ceiling as if he expected to see faces there. "Fill! Fill! Fill!"

For a moment they held their positions in attentive silence. Then Monty dropped his arms and shrugged, massaging his shoulder. "Now we wait," he said to Ray.

"I told you she'd be like this," Ray said, motioning with his head to Constance.

"Aren't you two a little old for séances?" she asked.

Monty looked modestly at the floor. Ray said, "You don't even know what you're seeing. This is power. This is putting ourselves in the center of life's ongoing process."

"The only thing you're in the center of is a bottle. Full moon. I came up with better magic in grade school."

"That's your whole problem, Constance. We're calling on the power of the whole damn beautiful universe, and you want to sleep through it."

"I must have missed the part with the universe. By the time you woke me up, all that was going on was two drunks howling at the moon."

Monty shook his head. "It's a shame."

Constance glared at him. "This is all you, isn't it? This was your brilliant idea."

He shrugged again. "I do it every month. Once, I opened a drawer and found a hundred and sixty-four dollars."

"A hundred and sixty-four dollars!" Ray broke in. "For opening a drawer! And he never has to put up with snide sons of bitches who think they can tell me how to drive my own route."

"Out," Constance said to Monty, pointing to the door.

"He's only telling you the truth. If you'd just open your eyes, you could be happy," Monty said.

She grabbed Monty at the elbow, her fingers sinking into the fleshy joint. "Every time I open my eyes, you've caused more damage. We came here to start fresh, but you've made him worse than ever."

"He's my friend. You can't talk like that to my friend," Ray said, but he had slumped into his chair, one foot propped on her soup pot, and his head wobbled and drooped.

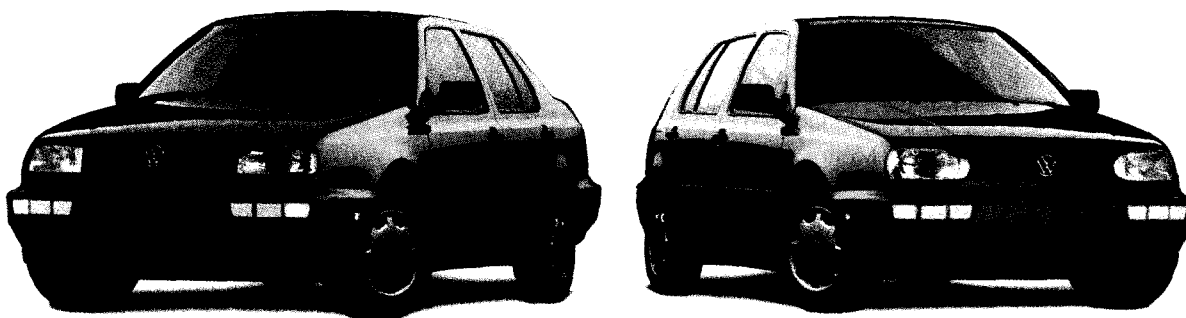
"You don't know what you're doing. I want to help you. I'm your best friend," Monty said to Constance, who was marching him to the door.

"I'll know my friends when I meet them," she said. "You can bet they won't be weird little sponging drunks who expect miracles to pay their rent." She yanked him into the hall, where the light was out again, and shoved him in the direction of the stairs. After she heard the soft thump of his body hitting a wall, she closed the apartment door, blew out the sputtering candle flame, and went back to bed, pulling the blanket over her head to block out Ray's snoring—a sound Monty had once called magnificent.

ON the way home from The Door of Italy, Constance was quiet, smiling at Ray's jokes, reaching across the seat to squeeze his hand when he told her how pretty she looked. As soon as he left the house the next morning—a long day ahead, a full load from Salinas—she headed for the shower. Constance knew she needed to get to Monty first. She couldn't wait for Ray to bring him home; already she could imagine the two of them at the door, giggling and bowing. She had to brace herself against the shower wall at the thought.

Later, just as she was leaving, she picked up a sack and hurried out to the garden. She collected five good-sized lettuce heads and a handful of snow peas, glancing at the tomato plants while she picked. If she had to make small talk, she could always ask him about whiteflies.

It was a clear day, still cool in the shade. Constance found herself half jogging, sweating, and she jumped when a dog yapped at her. Now that she knew he was here, she expected



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Monty to pounce on her from behind every tree, and before she was five blocks from home her heart was already thudding. She had to pause in a doorway to smooth her hair and skirt, and even so she was breathless when she walked into the beige waiting room and the receptionist looked up.

"Monty George," Constance said, and a man standing at the filing cabinet turned and grinned.

"I knew I knew those footsteps. How are you, Constance?"

"Good Lord," she said. He had become slim and lithe. She could have passed him on the street without looking twice. His dark slacks hung with a snappy crease, and rich hair waved over his forehead. He reminded Constance of a politician.

"You still have a call waiting, Mr. Miller," the receptionist said, and Constance glanced around.

"I'll call back," Monty said, crossing the room and touching Constance just above the elbow.

"Mr. Miller?" Constance said.

"The name my father gave me. Once I got sober, I thought I should respect it."

"Ray didn't mention you had a new name."

"I didn't have time to tell him." He winked up at her. "Things don't change, do they? You always did know more about me than Ray."

"I don't know about that," Constance murmured. She held out the sack of vegetables. "They're from our garden. Ray set it out for me."

"He mentioned," Monty said. "He said that you could make anything grow."

"He exaggerates," she said. "You know Ray."

"Not anymore. He looks great, Constance. You've been good for him." She shrugged, but Monty pressed his hand back on her elbow and kept talking. "I love how life brings the loose ends back together. After all those years ago in that dump in Cleveland, here we are in California. And looking better for the journey. So, are you going to join us for lunch?"

Constance had been distracted by the weight of his hand on her arm; the question caught her off balance. "Lunch?"

"Isn't that why you're here? I'm supposed to meet Ray in ten minutes."

"Ray's driving to Salinas. He won't be back until late."

"His routing got changed this morning. Just a run to the extension office. He probably tried to call you, but you were already out." Monty smiled, told the receptionist they would be back in two hours, and propelled Constance out the door while she stammered and hesitated. The last twosome on earth she wanted to join was Ray and Monty.

The sunlight was sharp, and she squinted at Monty, realizing she'd never seen him outside before. He walked with an assertive stride; Constance saw women across the street cut their eyes to him. He was telling stories, bouncing on the balls of his feet, hurrying her like a terrier. She wouldn't be-

lieve the coincidences in his life since he'd stopped drinking. He'd met people he hadn't seen since he was a boy. What he'd finally learned was that paths were set up to cross and cross again. So much needless anxiety. We never really lose anybody.

He steered her around the corner and across two streets, calling out to people as they went. He could greet them by name, remember children and pets. "How'd those onions take to the new manure?" he yelled. "Ever find Scooter's doll?"

He chattered and whooped all the way into The Happy Cup, where Ray, waiting with coffee, jumped up as Constance came in.

"Look who found me this morning," Monty said, nudging Constance to sit down and then crowding in next to her.

Ray relaxed, smiling at her frown and slinging his arm across the back of the seat. "This is great. So much to catch up on."

"Do you have a self-respecting refrigerator yet? I remember Constance defrosting the one in Cleveland every other day."

Constance glanced at Monty with surprise. She thought she remembered every inch of that apartment, but she had forgotten the refrigerator. Monty had named it Juneau.

"And that Godawful *chair*," Ray was saying. "Every time you sat down, your head was level with your knees."

Monty shook his head in delight. "One night after you went to bed, I was wide awake and hungry, so I took a box of macaroni and cheese, ran water into a bowl, and just dumped everything in. I figured the macaroni would soften up eventually, but after ten minutes they were still like little U-joints. I knew Constance would get mad if she found it in the trash. So I took the whole pot up on the roof and spread the stuff around like roofing tar. That orange sauce reflected the moonlight, and I got inspired. I dribbled it out to spell W-E. I wanted to do WELCOME, but I ran out."

Constance rolled her eyes, but Ray was laughing so hard he had to clutch the table. "I saw that," he finally gasped. "I went up one night to drink and I saw this weird fuzzy patch out by the edge. I was afraid to get near it. It looked radioactive."

"Do you remember anything?" Monty asked, wheeling to face Constance, who shuddered.

"I'm not like you. I try to forget." In her dreams, when Ray started drinking again, it was always that apartment she returned to. "I could never get the kitchen clean."

"I remember Monty sitting on the counter and singing 'She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain,' while you made dinner," Ray said. "I never heard so many verses."

"I'm surprised we can remember anything," Monty yipped.

"Me too," Constance said sourly, and the two men laughed harder, Ray reaching for her hand while Monty snaked his short arm around her shoulders.

"Who would have *guessed*?" Ray said. "Who would have ever imagined we'd survive it?"

Constance cleared her throat. "So, Monty. What can you tell me about whiteflies?"

He sat up again, affectionately squeezing her shoulder before he let his arm slip. "We have some products I can sample for you, but"—he glanced around and lowered his voice—"I'll tell you the best thing. Garlic spray, a little patience. And grow marigolds. They repel bugs and look cheerful in the garden."

Constance frowned. "I want to have tomatoes *this* year."

"You should see her in that garden," Ray said. "If a plant doesn't come up, it's got Constance to answer to."

"I'd come up," Monty said.

"Me too," Ray said.

"Broccoli's more obedient than you two ever were," Constance said.

Ray leaned toward Monty. "She keeps that broccoli running on time." He lifted his eyebrows, the look he always used to encourage her. She didn't feel encouraged. She felt as though she were in a room with no air.

"Sorry," she said, trying to sound light. "All I asked about was whiteflies."

The three of them stopped talking, and in the pause Constance saw Ray's crestfallen look and a spot that had somehow gotten on his shirt since the morning. She dropped her eyes. She hadn't meant to sound so hard. They pushed her; they always had. "Maybe you don't need marigolds," Monty was saying. "Those snow peas you brought me look fine. And of course there are several products."

"No, you're right," she said, cutting Monty off. "I'll try them. Who knows? Couldn't hurt."

"Couldn't hurt," Ray said, brightening.

"Who knows?" Monty said.

CONSTANCE left Ray and Monty at the café. They wheedled and protested when she got up, but by the time she made it to the door they had their elbows on the table and were snorting like a couple of teenagers. Ray came home that night with marigold flats balanced on each arm.

"Monty really knows about this," he said over dinner. "He's been reading up, talking to people, visiting organic farms. You should hear it. Interplanting, pheromones."

"I'll bet he plants at high tide, too." Constance speared a piece of pot roast for Ray's plate.

"Monty never met an idea he couldn't improve on. The man's got vision. Doesn't he look great?"

Constance sighed. "No. Maybe. I don't know what to think. He doesn't look like the same person. He doesn't even have the same name."

"Give him a chance. The sin but not the sinner, right?"

"I'm trying," Constance muttered, staring at her plate.

"Don't try so hard, angel." Ray lifted his eyebrows and smiled crookedly at her.

She shook her head. "So, did you stay in The Happy Cup all afternoon?"

"We went for a drive—he wanted to show me the acreage he's leased east of town. People waved when we passed. I felt like I was with a movie star."

"He may have missed his calling. How was the land?"

"What do I know? He's got forty acres. He wanted to know if a truck could get through for produce."

"Forty acres?" Constance said. "How does he think he's going to live? You can't even get grocery money off forty acres."

Ray hunched forward and pushed his plate away. "He figures on staying with AgPro. He wants to try some ideas, that's all."

"Good luck to him. Cultivating that kind of land and holding down a job ought to wear out even Monty George."

"It's leveled, already prepared," Ray said. "He wants to raise different crops, some things that are new around here. Work by hand. Get someone he trusts to work with him." Ray stopped and looked at Constance, who choked.

"Oh, no," she said. "Sorry, boys. I'll wait for the moon to fill up my pockets before I tenant for Monty George."

"Stop for a minute and listen. You'd finally have enough room to grow corn. And Monty's got strategies for the tipburn you were getting on that lettuce."

"So you two just sat there all afternoon and planned my future."

"He's got you in mind. He thinks you're what the whole idea needs."

"What, somebody sober?" Constance cried, and Ray set his mouth. "Or somebody who knows how to work? You think everything has changed. Well, nothing's changed. You and Monty George talk, and I'm the one who does the hoeing."



"You know," Ray said, his voice so high and tight it seemed to curl at the edges, "that's exactly what Monty said. 'Somebody has to be sober here.' His words exactly."

"How reassuring, to hear Monty's assessment of the situation."

"You'd be in real danger of learning something if you stopped your precious work long enough to listen."

"You'd be in danger of making something of yourself if you quit listening to Monty. Or maybe you'd rather be up on the roof with macaroni and cheese."

"People do change, Constance. But you sit there and count up every mistake."

"Are we calling five and a half years a mistake?" Looking at Ray's bland, satisfied face, she had to clutch the edge of the table. "We didn't have *heat*, damn it. I slept next to you after I cleaned up your vomit. Am I supposed to believe you've changed just like that?"

Ray shook his head, his lips thin and trembling. "That's right. You pinned it. You're supposed to believe I've changed just like that." He pushed his chair back from the table.

"Where are you going?" she said, watching him move toward the door and pick up his jacket.

"Guess."

He let the screen door bang behind him, and Constance watched from the kitchen table as he skirted the garden and jumped lightly over the fence. She was shaking and couldn't catch her breath. She hadn't heard that spiny threat in Ray's voice in six months; it was almost thrilling.

After five minutes she got up to clear the table, her arms still trembling. She wished he'd eaten more dinner. She wished he'd stayed long enough to let her tell him he was a saint. Anyone could see it. But she was a saint too, and she was ready to hear somebody say so.

AT ten o'clock, when Ray wasn't back, Constance couldn't stand waiting anymore and went out walking. She knew where to go. During their first week in town she had made note of the bars, judging the ones most likely to have a country-western jukebox and a sing-along clientele. She tried First Call, on Fourth Street, and Arlene's, on Dixon. No Ray, no Monty. She walked twice past The Long Stop, down from Arlene's, but a brassy din boomed out the door, and she couldn't force herself into it.

Instead she wandered back home, where she knew Ray wouldn't be waiting for her. The thought was comforting, and Constance relaxed as the sweet night air settled on her arms. She could glimpse other people's gardens by the occasional porch light—shapes of trees and hedges, white roses like candles in the dark. Passing a low fence draped with honeysuckle, Constance picked off a strand to smell as she walked.

By the time she turned onto her block, she felt buoyant,

ready for a drive. She wanted to find not Ray but the land itself. The creamy moon was finally rising, giving Constance enough light, once she was out of town, to see where to turn off the state road and then off the gravel access spur, and then to make out the two figures alone in the field, standing and waving her in.

"Took you long enough," Ray said when she closed the car door behind her. "I didn't think you were coming, but Monty kept saying we had to wait for you."

"What are you waiting for?" Constance said, teetering and sliding down the low incline toward them.

"Balance," Monty said. "Root, stem, leaf."

"Don't tell me," Constance said. "I get to be the root."

"You hold things in place, angel," Ray said.

"All our searching brought us here," Monty said, and she turned to him.

"You didn't have to search us out," she said. "We were doing fine."

"Life puts us in each other's way," he murmured.

"I'm ready to be in someone else's way," she said.

"Then why did you come here tonight?" Ray asked.

"To serve notice," she said.

During the long pause that followed she listened to the night insects and felt pleasantly airborne. "Constance?" Ray finally said, his voice jagged. "Are you going to leave now? After everything?"

"I could use a break," she said after a while.

A WEEK later she rode back out to the plot with Ray and Monty. They rode in Ray's cab, Constance sitting up high between the two men, who kept laughing and elbowing across her to switch the radio station.

In the daylight she could see that the plot was hedged on two sides by walnut groves. Constance wondered about late-afternoon shadows, but she kept her concern to herself. Beside her, Monty was craning to see over the dashboard. He pointed out the places he had retiled, where the soil lay like cake in dark and moist ridges.

The men got out of the truck and Monty began to pace out rows, marking them with twine. He had brought compost and seed in bulk from the co-op. Constance poured herself a cup of coffee from Ray's thermos, sat on the cab's step, and watched them. She smiled, waved, and stayed put whenever they called to her.

They clowned, hurdling the furrows and pitching themselves face-down at the end of every row. Sometimes they came back to the truck and double-checked the graphs Monty had brought. Constance sat and watched, trying to envision Monty's curving rows of chard, his rye and squash side by side. She should have known Monty's garden would be like no one else's. Even when she could see they were getting it wrong—the rows too close, seeds too shallow—she smiled and waved to them, and didn't say a word. ☼



Harry Houdini and Arthur Conan Doyle

by NANCY CALDWELL SOREL

ARTHUR Conan Doyle was obsessed from childhood with the supernatural. His Irish heritage, peopled with fairies and elves, prompted a dreamy acceptance of the insubstantial. Drawn to spiritualism, he attended his first séance at age twenty—about the time he was studying medicine, and seven years before the appearance of Sherlock Holmes.

In America, Ehrich Weiss, alias Harry Houdini, fifth son of a Hungarian rabbi, also tried séances at an early age. He was fascinated by illusion, but of the magical rather than the otherworldly kind. He began with simple conjury, and then perfected his own specialty—the artistry of escape.

Both men attained enormous celebrity. The creator of Holmes was knighted, and Houdini became the king of magic. In 1920 the latter was touring Britain, performing such breathtaking stunts as climbing out of locked trunks and strait-jackets. Sir Arthur, now a convinced spiritualist, went to Portsmouth to see him and was dazzled by his almost swami-like discipline. He saw Houdini as another form of spiritualist,

and after the show hurried backstage. The ruddy six-foot-four writer and the small, wiry magician met as seekers into the mystical. They talked for hours.

The two men corresponded often and hobnobbed when Sir Arthur came to America to lecture on spiritualism. Houdini was too impressed by his friend's distinction and sincerity to disclose that in his experience, mediums were charlatans and their practices sheer devilry. He tried to explain how certain spooky tricks were done, but Sir Arthur would not listen. Perhaps Houdini should not have listened when Lady Conan Doyle suggested that they try to contact his beloved deceased mother—but in fact he missed her terribly and could not resist. As he and Sir Arthur sat in strained expectancy, Lady Conan Doyle, in a kind of trance, called for a message from Mother Weiss and took it down verbatim, as the spirit moved her. Sir Arthur thought the event a great success. But Houdini knew it was not: the message was in English—a language his Yiddish-speaking mama never mastered. ☛

Beneath the Ice

*Ice-diving opens up an eerie, beautiful world
of unexpected possibilities*

IT takes a saw with an eighteen-inch bar to get through the ice in the middle of the lake. When the chain reaches the water, it throws back a clear, arcing fount as thick as my thumb.

I cut a triangle six feet on each side. When I'm finished, I press down on a corner with my boot: nothing. I sink the saw back into the notch and take another inch, rocking the bar. Another shove with the heel. Now the slab

by **Andrew Todhunter** rocks, water pushing up through the cracks and pooling along the perimeter. Two of us sink the floe with our weight and slip it to one side beneath the ice. On the black surface of the water, drops of oil twist into paisleys of electric green and plum. Beside them, upside down, float the reflected summits of the High Sierra.

Over the expedition-weight Capilene underwear, a rag sweater, two pairs of wool socks, and a pile jumpsuit known as a woolybear comes the dry suit. Of coated nylon, airtight, it seals with rubber gaskets at the neck and wrists. Then comes the brass-ringed body harness, followed by the weight belt: some twenty-five pounds of lead shot. Over this is an inflatable vest, called a buoyancy compensator, and then the tank, the regulator, neoprene mittens and hood, the fins, and the mask.

We clip lines to the rings on our harnesses. Flashlights, secured by lanyards, are tucked into pockets in our vests. Inflator hoses are coupled with valves on the vest and the dry suit, and the air is turned on. We look at our gauges: 2,250

pounds of air; depth, 0; dive time, 0; residual nitrogen, 0. The compass swivels freely in its chamber of oil.

We are about to go ice-diving, which as a recreational sport is relatively new but is beginning to develop a following. Ice-diving is done professionally by ice-salvage divers, who make a fair sum winching trucks and snowmobiles out of lakes. Search-and-rescue divers with the same skills save several lives nationwide every year. To their ranks one can now add hundreds of Americans who go diving under the ice not because they have to but because they want to. Two of the nation's largest diving organizations, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (800-729-7234) and the National Association of Underwater Instructors (800-553-6284), now offer instruction and certification in ice-diving, the prerequisites for which generally include certifications in open-water and advanced open-water diving.

Ice-diving as a recreational sport is practiced wherever conditions allow, from frozen lakes and quarries in divers' home states to the serpentine ice caverns that can be found beneath the polar ice caps.

But whether done at the North Pole or beneath the surface of a more accessible

location, ice-diving offers displays and physical sensations that one can experience in no other way.

THERE are two of us who will make this dive, and a support team of four. Bobbing in the water, we go over the signals with our line-tenders. The slow bleed of adrenaline has sharpened the landscape. Low clouds tear their bellies on the peaks. We turn to the sun, gathering heat. Then we let the air out of our dry suits and descend.

In the first seconds the unprotected skin around the face protests and then goes numb. We sink, watching for the bottom. At fifty feet the mud plain looms out of the darkness. We pump a blast of air into the dry suits and arrest our descent, hovering with our fin tips five feet from the bottom. Had we landed in the silt, or even brushed it with our fins, we would have sent a cloud of decaying organic matter in all directions. As it is, the pulses of current from our fin blades strike the membranous surface of the silt. It quivers without tearing, like the coating on milk that has been boiled in a pan.

Far above, the triangle is aglow in the dimly translucent field of ice. Our lines stretch upward, vanishing. I give a firm tug: "Okay." A tug comes back from my tender: "Acknowledged." The trail of air bubbles works its way to the surface without hurry, rumbling faintly. I take a deep breath and expel it with one quick contraction of my diaphragm. The bolus of air breaks into three spheres that flatten into mushrooms the diameter of dinner plates, expanding as they climb.

We send two tugs up the lines: "Going out, give us slack." Keeping our distance from the silt, we move across the bottom. We follow a bearing due north. If we are separated from our lines, a 180-degree turn should bring us within sight of the hole.

A school of fingerling trout hangs motionless above a meadow of freshwater grass. We could pick them like apples if we cared to, collect them in a bag. They're sleeping out the winter, drunk with cold. I touch one with a mitten tip. A tremor in the gills, the tail flickers once, then nothing.

Farther on is a dinghy, perfectly intact. Right side up, it sits becalmed on the surface of the silt. As if abandoned on a winter beach, gathering snow, the benches

and deck are blanketed with pale sediment. We sweep our lights beneath the benches, looking for a tackle box, an unopened bottle of beer. This wreck surrenders nothing—a sign of other divers here before us, or else a thorough abandonment of ship.

WHEN we have used a third of our air, we ascend to the ice, still 500 lateral feet from the hole. We come up gradually, hands raised to cushion the landing. Our breaths lie pinned against the ice in shimmering pools. Expanding as we add to them with each exhalation, they elongate, break apart. Following ravines and valleys too subtle for the eye, they seek the highest place.

The ice seems to glow from its core. Palpable as mist, it is a pale light in which no shadows fall. The ice is smoked through with minute bubbles. Cracks lost deep within glitter like bayonets.

I inflate the dry suit until I am buoyant enough to "fall" upward and lie flat on my stomach against the ice. I crawl a few feet upside down on my hands and knees. With the heels of my fists I pound the ice. *Whump. Whump.* When struck, the ponds of air leap and scatter into quicksilver, spiraling in the current of the blow.

Pushing off the ice, I stand upside down and join my partner. Our exhalations tumble along our chests and break down our fins. There is a moment of vertigo before the inner ear accommodates the artificial gravity of this inverted world. Then we accept the illusion that we're standing upright on the ice.

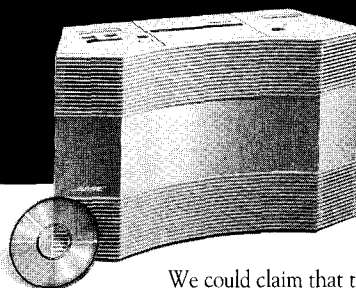
The atmosphere above our heads—the deepening lake—is green darkening to black. The luminescent plain at our feet is as perfect and featureless as a glacier in the half light of a gathering storm. The horizon is uniform, impenetrable. My hands are getting colder.

We check our air. It's time to head back to the hole. Turning south, we take the lines in hand and send a fast series of tugs. We brace, leaning back.

On the other side of the ice our tenders set off like sled dogs at a run. The lines go taut and we begin to move, gaining speed. Howling through our regulators, we ski upside down across the ice.

The wedge of blue sky suddenly appears, hurtling toward us. As I dive head first through the triangle, I'm blinded. I look straight down into the sun. ☼

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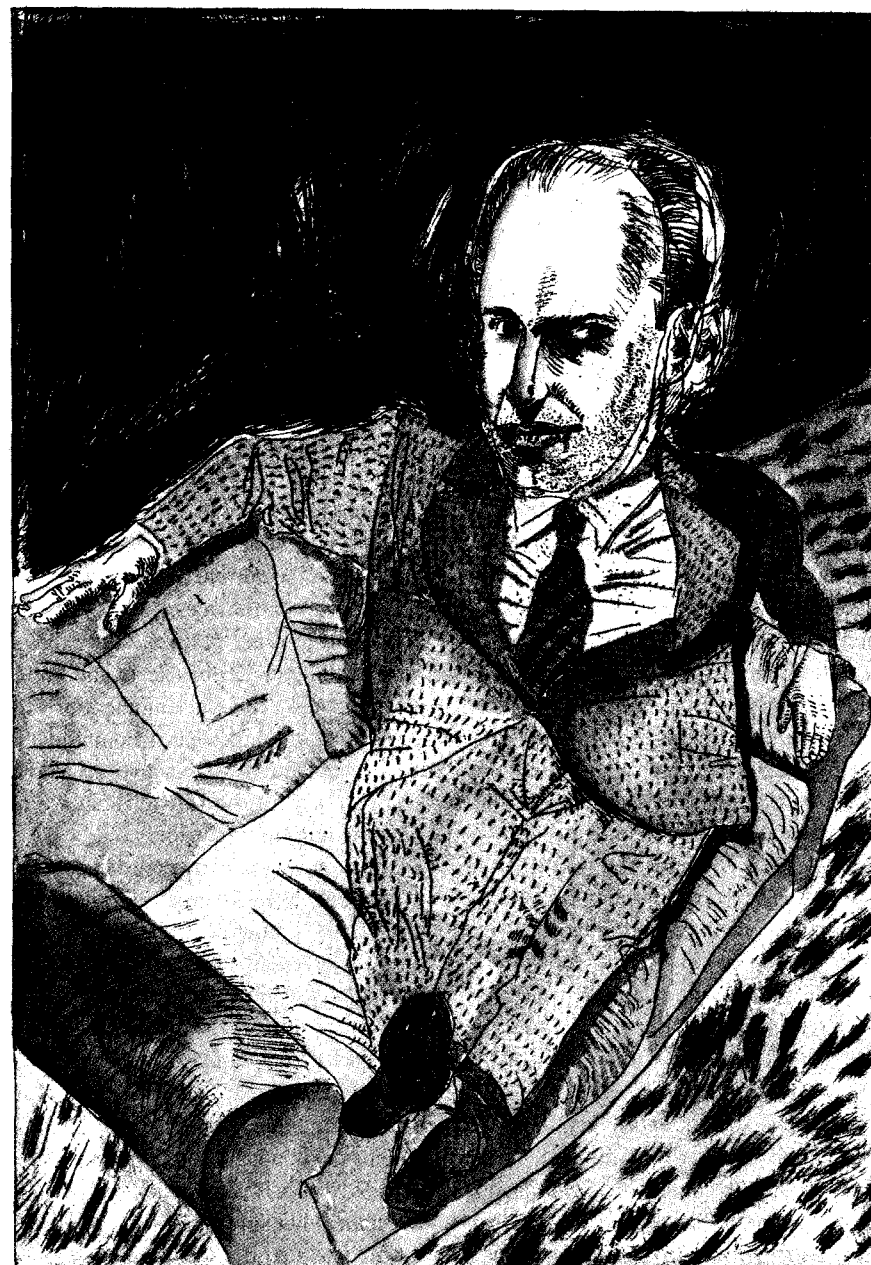
BENJAMIN BRITTEN

A Biography

by Humphrey Carpenter.
Scribner's, 687 pages,
\$30.00.

IN the good old days of musical biography, composers basked in the glow of success or shivered bravely in obscurity. Their music mirrored their love lives. Requited love turned into bubbly spring songs in major keys; unrequited love demanded the *pathétique* gloom of minor tonalities. To understand the music, all you had to do was *cherchez la femme*. If there was no visible candidate for the role of the distant beloved, or if the composer showed little interest in the opposite sex, poetic license—or a team of scriptwriters—could give the music an appropriately romantic subtext.

A somewhat more sophisticated picture of the composer arrived with the popularization of Freudian notions of sublimation. Beethoven, Wagner, Schumann, and Brahms were put into analysis, their letters and diaries scrutinized for neurotic symptoms. This view reached TV and



movie screens in the films of Ken Russell, where Tchaikovsky, Delius, Mahler, and Strauss appeared as crippled neurotics, somehow producing music despite (or because of) their knots of emotional repres-

GEORGE GERSHWIN

sion. Now their music mirrored their unconscious fantasy lives—which in Russell's films always seemed to involve nuns with whips.

Then came modernism and its cult of

impersonality. If music was powerless to express anything, as Stravinsky claimed, the composer's life had merely a functional relation to his work. As if to prove this point, modernist composers went out of their way to appear conventional. They dressed like bankers or professors and presented themselves as humble craftsmen, not romantic visionaries. No wonder Hollywood, which served up fanciful biopics of Schubert, Chopin, and even Gershwin, never filmed the stories of Stravinsky, Bartók, and Webern. No wonder the official modernist biographies were so dull.

In the past decade, however, our knowledge of the lives of twentieth-century composers has changed. With the passing of vigilant heirs and keepers of the flame, newly released letters and diaries have shown that even the most austere modernists could stoop to romance or folly. Alban Berg, whose widow perpetuated the myth of a perfect marriage, pursued an extramarital relationship—but, then, his accountant probably did too. Igor Stravinsky, very much the proper Parisian during the twenties and thirties, maintained two households—like many proper Parisians. Anton von Webern, the most intellectually rigorous composer of his generation, was an idealistic socialist one day, a naive Nazi the next.

Even more lurid tales lurked behind the grim, impersonal modernist façade. Schoenberg's first wife left him for Richard Gerstl, a painter of terrifying nude self-portraits; when she returned to Schoenberg, Gerstl destroyed his works and committed suicide. Schoenberg responded to this crisis, some claim, by abandoning the conventions of tonality and leaping into the uncharted chaos of atonal expressionism: the coincidence of the two events is suggestive. The critical turning point of twentieth-century music, usually attributed to the historical breakdown of musical grammar, may have had its roots in a tawdry domestic triangle—*cherchez la femme* returned with a vengeance. For many other composers, it has become clear, the appropriate instruction was *cherchez l'homme*, for the twentieth century has been the golden age of the gay composer. Copland, Poulenc, Thomson, Barber, Blitzstein, and Britten among the dead, Tippett, Rorem, and Corigliano among the living, led and lead gay lives, though only some of them treated homoerotic subjects in their music.

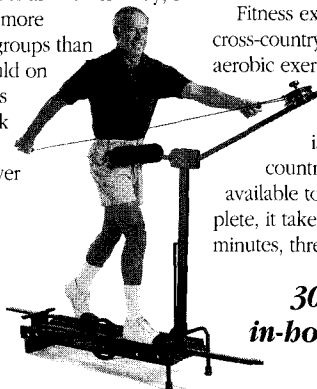
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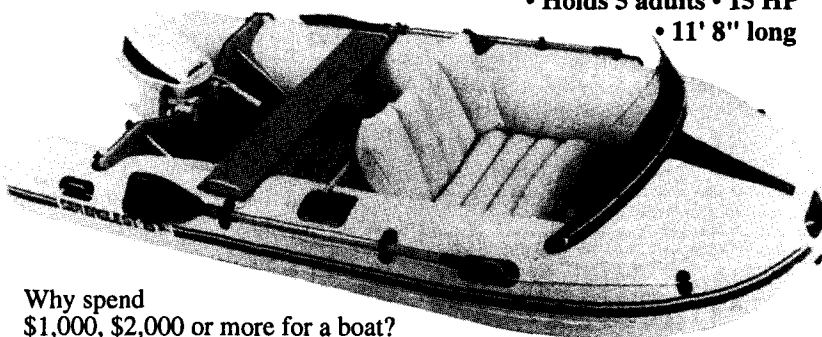
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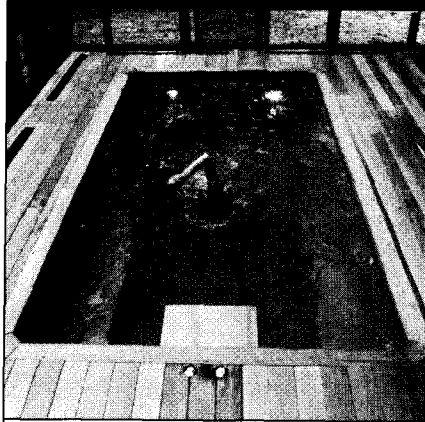
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These revelations have perked up the genre of musical biography—which can too easily degenerate into “and then he wrote”—if only by replacing the wholesome official myths propagated during the composers’ lifetimes by publicists, publishers, and wives, not to mention the composers themselves. Once the facts, scandalous or not, are revealed, however, biographers face the difficult task of relating the lives to the music. To speak about the meaning of a piece of music, particularly an abstract symphony or sonata, is an extremely speculative undertaking. Interpreting music through the patchy evidence of letters, diaries, and hazy memories of interested and disinterested parties is an even shakier one. And interpreting the psychological condition of the composer through the evidence of the music—the goal of psychobiography—is the most difficult, not to say questionable, project of all. At its worst, posthumous psychoanalysis can sound like dishing. Three new biographies, of Charles Ives, George Gershwin, and Benjamin Britten, pursue different paths, yielding widely different ratios of heat to light.

ALTHOUGH Ives, Gershwin, and Britten could not be more different as composers, their careers demonstrate the power of myth to shape musical reputations. The Britten myth was promoted by his publishers. Encouraged by Boosey & Hawkes and, later, Faber Music, a chorus of London critics greeted each work as a new masterpiece by Saint Ben. Critics found the operas highly moral, even Christian, and never mentioned the *H* word, despite Britten’s repeated choice of homosexual themes and librettists.

It was a well-intentioned cover-up. Even in the late sixties homosexuality was a crime in England, and critics still dared not speak its name—at least not in public. Britten’s orientation, and the nature of his quasi-marital relationship with the tenor Peter Pears, was widely known. His attraction to boys, especially to the boys whom he cast in his operas, was also known, if less widely. Probably this disturbing predilection, rather than the relationship with Pears, led Britten’s protectors to construct their reverent myth. Britten’s music was understood, therefore, according to two different traditions—overt and covert. Printed articles ignored or obscured many implications of

the music, while an underground reading of the works gave them a meaning that was not apparent to the public or even to performers. The tenor Jon Vickers was outraged to hear that Peter Grimes, a role he had made his own, might be a homosexual. In contrast, the critic Andrew Porter assumed, with no evidence in the score, that when Albert Herring—the virginal May King—has his night of debauchery, it is with another boy. Not until the publication, in 1977, of a groundbreaking article on *Peter Grimes* by the musicologist Philip Brett was the homoerotic theme given explicit critical treatment. Since the appearance of that article and Brett’s *Cambridge Opera Handbook on Grimes* (1983), Britten has come to be seen as a musical harbinger of gay liberation—a role he might have refused.

The Gershwin myth was more a product of the American celebrity industry than of a publisher’s promotion. The 1924 premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* made Gershwin world-famous, but his physical glamour and the wealth he displayed so conspicuously made him a star in twenties fashion—a Valentino crossed with Jay Gatsby. To immortalize his own myth, Gershwin authorized a biography by Isaac Goldberg, *George Gershwin: A Study in American Music*, which first appeared in 1931. Goldberg’s tone is pure Jazz Age, and must have sounded a bit tinny by the early thirties, as did Gershwin’s music; but his book established the framework for Gershwin worship which was to be kept in place until the death of Gershwin’s brother, Ira, in 1983.

The pursuit of celebrity, however, reaps what it sows. During Gershwin’s lifetime his fame spawned shrill detractors. Even his best friends questioned his widely touted credentials as a sexual athlete; rumor had it that he was either sexless or homosexual, though he was constantly surrounded by beautiful and talented women. In the music world his claims to have crossed over triumphantly from Tin Pan Alley to Carnegie Hall were challenged by mutterings that he was musically illiterate and dependent on others for the shaping and orchestration of his music. At rehearsals of his concert music he often brought along Bill Daly, a highly skilled professional musician who, some players claimed, seemed to know the scores better than the composer did. Shortly after Gershwin’s death, moreover,

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the composer Joseph Schillinger, with whom Gershwin had studied, claimed that he had written parts of *Porgy and Bess*. Not until the unofficial Gershwin biography by Charles Schwartz was published, in 1973, were these rumors examined at all seriously. Schwartz was denied access to Gershwin's papers by the family, and so he depended on hearsay—much of which appears again in Joan Peyser's new book, although with a different spin.

Charles Ives created and published his own myth, even though he refused to publish much of his music. In 1920 Ives printed, at his own expense, his Piano Sonata No. 2, titled *Concord, Massachusetts 1840-1860*. Framing the musical score were Ives's *Essays Before a Sonata*. Ostensibly these were about Emerson, Hawthorne, the Alcotts, and Thoreau, the subjects of the sonata's four movements, but in fact they were full of autobiographical details and the composer's political opinions. Ives hoped that the essays would ease the way to a performance of his densely written, forbiddingly unconventional score. When the sonata was finally given its premiere, by John Kirkpatrick in 1939, critics turned to the essays for guidance, and assumed that Ives himself was a kind of nineteenth-century New England transcendentalist. The most striking feature of Ives's autobiographical statements was his description of his father, George Ives, a ne'er-do-well businessman from a prosperous family in Danbury, Connecticut, and an occasional bandmaster, whose experiments in tuning, harmony, and superimposed sounds were, Charles said, the source of his music. Whatever Charles Ives may have learned from his father, his attribution of influence was also a way of establishing his independence from the innovations of European modernists. Ives claimed to have invented atonality, polytonality, polyrhythms, and even serialism long before his European counterparts.

When Ives died, most of his music lay, unpublished, in a disordered state in his barn. Among the many composers who worked to put the music in order, Elliott Carter was the first to blow the whistle. Carter had met Ives in the early 1920s and had attended concerts with him, after which Ives would savagely parody the "modern" music of Stravinsky or Ravel at the piano. Yet although Ives said that their music was not as modern as his,

Carter has claimed that Ives was adding dissonances to older pieces at this time. Recently Carter's account was seconded by the psychoanalyst Maynard Solomon, whose writings on Beethoven and Schubert have spurred the revival of musical psychobiography. Solomon cites numerous instances in which Ives backdated his compositions in an attempt to establish his originality. The entire story of George Ives's influence, Solomon thinks, was a product of Ives's self-deception. He also points to the persistent misogyny and homophobia of Ives's writings—Ives called his male critics "ladies" and "sissies." Ives the transcendental visionary becomes Ives the borderline personality.

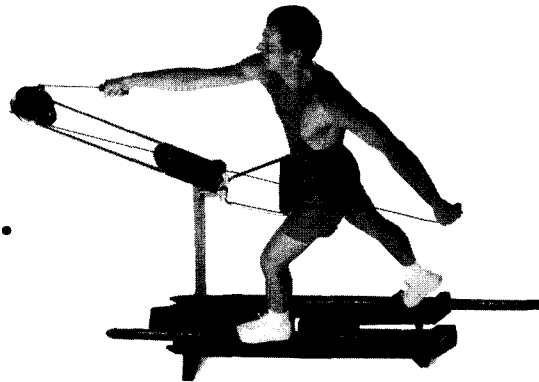
BEFORE turning to the books, let me state my own generic reservations about psychobiography—the approach of Peyser to Gershwin and of Feder to Ives, though emphatically not that of Carpenter to Britten. Psychoanalytic vocabulary invariably stresses two areas of speculation which can obscure the meaning of an artist's work. These are the ideas of pathology and of the unconscious. As a healing discipline, psychoanalysis is wedded to notions of sickness and health. In the practice of psychobiography this concern often imposes crassly conventional ideas of a healthy life on subjects who may have found their own unconventional lives perfectly satisfactory. Charles Ives adored his father; Gershwin never married; Britten was gay—something must be wrong, Dr. Ruth.

These composers were richly productive, and their work has made a lasting impact on musical culture; a hunt for pathology inevitably reduces their music to a symptom and thereby trivializes its form and content. In particular the family-romance narrative of the Oedipus complex, whether described skillfully or not, tends to recast all creative motives as forms of rivalry and aggression. Even Freud, whose essay on Leonardo is the problematic forerunner of psychobiography, admitted that psychoanalysis was powerless to explain creativity. This admitted failure leaves a huge lacuna in the life of an artist. It might make more sense, given the energy and attention that composers must devote to their music, to see the arrangements of their lives, their relationships and habits, and the contents of their fantasies as symptoms of the mu-

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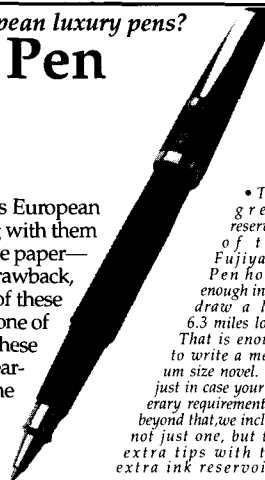
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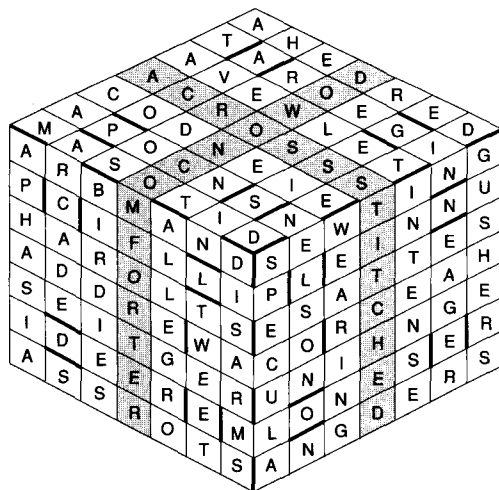
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sic, rather than the other way around. Unfortunately, however, psychobiographers often have a far greater knowledge of neurosis than of musical composition. This imbalance skews their efforts.

The attribution of unconscious motives to composers can trivialize their work further. When the psychobiographer neatly divides a work's meanings into conscious and unconscious ones, the so-called conscious meaning is invariably bland, while the unconscious has all the fun. Let's call this a manifestation of genius envy. The psychobiographer (like Kinbote in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*) claims to create a more interesting work of art than the author's original. Invoking the unconscious can also serve to disarm the work—it's an artistic insanity plea forced on the absent artist by the biographer. When, in 1978, the critic Andrew Porter claimed that "Grimes's inner struggle . . . is against a homosexuality that neither he nor, for that matter, his creator is consciously aware of" (one of the first times the covert theme was broached in public), he inadvertently or prophylactically lobotomized both the composer and the audience, and sanitized the opera. How could Britten, who had taken an active role in shaping the libretto, not be conscious of the motives of his main character? If we assume that Grimes is lucid about homosexuality, the meaning of the opera becomes complicated and threatening and discomfiting—indeed, the opera almost comes apart.

JOAN Peyser, the author of biographies of Pierre Boulez and Leonard Bernstein, writes in a clipped, jackhammer style that she may consider hard-boiled but that readers may find mean-spirited, coarse, and humorless: she has a tin ear for jokes, which she often cites as examples of people's malicious natures. Although her books are aimed at the mass market, Peyser was for seven years the editor of the prestigious journal *Musical Quarterly*, where she gave psychoanalytic writings on music particular prominence. As in her other biographies, however, Peyser's main interest is in scandal. She has nothing new to say about Gershwin's music, giving us instead an account of the life which reiterates two points. First, as if this were a scandal: the Gershwins were not very nice people. Gershwin's mother, Rose, was particularly not nice, and his sister-

in-law, Leonore, was the least nice of them all, if not one of the most awful people who ever lived. Second, and more scandalous: George Gershwin was a heterosexually promiscuous man who apparently never figured out how to use a condom and produced at least two love children, both of whom compose music.

Gershwin, according to Peyser, was by turns sadistic, masochistic, shy, seductive, insensitive, oversexed, and undersexed. She accuses him of being heartless, narcissistic, an adulterer, a “womanizer” (quaint term), and even a murderer. (Peyser relates a story told by Gershwin’s valet, Paul Mueller, who implicates

masochism. Given her tone-deafness to twenties froth, it’s surprising that she makes no cryptobiographical claims for “Land of the Gay Caballero.”

Peyser constantly berates George, who could barely make a move without his parents and siblings, for an inability to connect to other people. Yet for me, one photo in the book reveals a Gershwin that Peyser never sees. Gershwin is sitting at the piano with his greatest disciple, Harold Arlen; the two master tunesmiths are obviously enchanted by the sheet music in front of them (“Stormy Weather”? “Mine”?) and by each other’s company. Arlen wraps his arm around Gershwin,

no matter what the music establishment might think, her books had been taken seriously by psychoanalysts (not that she offered any examples). As in Peyser’s other books, many of the subjects and sources here seem motivated by envy and greed and have an insatiable capacity for petty carping. The reader may conclude that Peyser can’t help bringing out these qualities in anyone she writes about.

Peyser relies heavily on scraps of interviews, some of which have already appeared in other books. She provides no clear acknowledgment of this, and no systematic documentation for her sources, whether written or oral; maddeningly for



Gershwin in the apparent suicide of a chorus girl who was “crazy in love with him.”) But his biggest sin seems to have been his reticence, which irritates his biographer no end. Peyser accuses him of putting all his feelings into music, not words. Good old sublimation—this is supermarket Freud. To compensate for George’s annoying devotion to music, Peyser claims that Ira’s lyrics were in fact a coded “cryptobiography” of George, though she doesn’t make much of this “find,” because she is more interested in discrediting Ira than in using him as a witness. As a typical example, Peyser cites the lyrics of “Treat Me Rough,” from *Girl Crazy*, as evidence of George’s sado-

who seems to purr.

More psychobabble than psychoanalysis, sprinkled with “insights” into the nature of creativity and genius, faulty descriptions of the music, and questionable assertions of fact, Peyser’s book reads like a transcript from a Geraldo show, or like a legal brief prepared for the unplanned descendants (one of whom gave himself the name Alan Gershwin) by those lawyers who advertise on late-night TV—patrimony cases our specialty. When challenged by Martin Goldsmith to defend the book on National Public Radio’s *Performance Today*, Peyser said that in most cases she had two witnesses for each fact and that

CHARLES IVES

anyone interested in verifying her more

outrageous statements (which—who knows?—might be true), there are no footnotes and no bibliography. At times she reports verbatim conversations between people who are long dead, with no indication whether these are reconstructions based on the memories of interested third parties. One of her sources, often only by implication, appears to be Alan Gershwin himself, who is hardly an uninterested party. She also relies on the testimony of Gershwin’s valet, who was fired by Ira Gershwin right after his brother’s death and who seems to have been plotting his revenge ever since. She even cites,



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repeatedly, the infamously romanticized Hollywood screenplay of the film *Rhapsody in Blue* as evidence about Gershwin's life. It's an embarrassing book.

GERSHWIN deserves more thought. His music raises significant questions about the connections between many strands of American culture—questions Peyser acknowledges, if only by implication, in her bizarre claim that Gershwin's career was somehow damaged by the emergence of Aaron Copland. (If anything, the reverse was true: Copland did not achieve popularity until after Gershwin's death.) Gershwin placed his music at the intersection of three genres—popular song, jazz, and classical concert music. His advocates, using the old but still potent ploy of reverse snobbery, defend the music as a triumph of the vernacular over the elitism of the concert hall. Detractors see his "serious" music as a kitschy fusion of imitation jazz and sham classical. (No one questions Gershwin's achievement as a songwriter.) Gershwin's music, however, is best heard as a transaction between musical genres rather than a simple contrast of one style with another.

In the 1920s and 1930s Gershwin, along with Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, and Vincent Youmans, transformed the idiom of the popular song. Popular tunes, which had been predominantly nostalgic and sentimental, now became sophisticated, syncopated, and contemporary-sounding. Although the composers borrowed so heavily from one another that their work could be called a team effort, Gershwin distinctively fused two previously unconnected elements in his songs: the melodic blues scale from jazz and the harmonies of classical composers such as Delius, Debussy, Ravel, and, eventually, Stravinsky and Berg. Gershwin pursued this stylistic crossbreeding systematically. In most of his songs the melody begins with the simple pentatonic (black-note) scale and then adds "blue" notes, while the harmony becomes increasingly chromatic, sliding from one rich chord to the next. The turbulent harmonic underpinning gives the simple melody notes a powerful emotional thrust, which Gershwin further exploited by his habit of repeating a note while changing its harmonization. His calculations of the interplay of melody

and harmony were as astute as Chopin's.

Perhaps owing to Gershwin's influence (or was *he* influenced by Duke Ellington and Art Tatum?), these relatively advanced harmonies crossed over to jazz. The simple harmonies of the twenties, which still echoed ragtime, gave way to the richer chords and the progressions of swing and then bebop. Gershwin's songs survive today mainly as jazz standards, performed in a manner very distant from their original Broadway style. If it were not for the capacity of jazz artists like Charlie Parker, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah Vaughan to renew them, Gershwin's songs might sound like no more than period pieces. I find that the recent series of lovingly reconstructed complete recordings of *Strike Up the Band* and *Girl Crazy* only prove this point. The stolid historical reverence of these recordings is neither campy nor convincing, just disrespectful—the deadliest possibility. How Fitzgerald and Vaughan managed to reinvigorate Ira's words along with George's music remains one of the great mysteries.

Gershwin's relation to classical music is also more complex than the usual picture of misplaced upward aspirations would imply. Unlike Paul McCartney, whose *Liverpool Cantata* may seem like a pop musician's incidental self-indulgence, but like Frank Zappa, Gershwin composed concert pieces throughout his career; they served as laboratories for the songs. Gershwin always had classical aspirations, and, contrary to the myth and Peyser, the classical world was overwhelmingly receptive to his efforts. He felt freer to experiment harmonically in the concert hall—witness the piano's first theme in the Concerto in F, with its stinging major sevenths—than on Broadway. Some of his tunes from the early twenties still sound like Victor Herbert or Gilbert and Sullivan, whereas later songs, such as "A Foggy Day" and "Who Cares?" assimilate the sophisticated dissonances of the concert pieces.

Though his concert pieces served as fruitful experiments, however, they were never accepted as examples of musical modernism. Unlike Copland, his contemporary, Gershwin did not apply the disjunctive techniques of modern music to his popular compositions. Copland's jazz-influenced pieces of the twenties chop up the sounds of jazz in much the way Stravinsky and Bartók pulverized

folk tunes. Throughout his career Copland displayed a genius for transforming jazz, Mexican dances, cowboy songs, or Shaker hymns into his own distinctive modernist music—whose modernism, moreover, was as recognizably American as Stuart Davis's cubism (contrary to Peyser's jingoistic charge that Copland abandoned the American vernacular).

Gershwin followed a different path. Where Copland's identity appears in the way he transformed his material, Gershwin's voice appears in the tunes themselves. Although his classical works, particularly the Concerto in F, are cleverly constructed, he remained, as Leonard Bernstein said, a songwriter in technique and inspiration, and in his concert work he preserved the forms of popular song. *Rhapsody in Blue*, Concerto in F, and *An American in Paris* are all song medleys—but this is their strength, not their weakness. These works succeed not just because the tunes are strong but because the melodies remain intact as thirty-two-bar tunes and are not reduced to the status of themes or motives. The medley form allowed the popular material to play an active role in a classical setting. In this fashion Gershwin placed classical and popular elements on an even footing. And in spite of decades of critical doubts his classical works survive in the concert repertory while remaining true to their Broadway origins.

YET Gershwin's reputation is not completely secure. The problematic aspects of his music come to a head in *Porgy and Bess*, generally considered his masterpiece. During the civil-rights struggles of the sixties black artists boycotted *Porgy and Bess*. After successful revivals by the Houston and Metropolitan operas, however, *Porgy* was hailed as an operatic classic. But the recent reaction against a planned production of *Show Boat* in Toronto points to possible troubles ahead. Gershwin insisted that *Porgy and Bess* had to be sung by a black cast—a progressive stance at a time not far removed from the blackface in *Birth of a Nation* and *The Jazz Singer*. But wasn't the opera in effect composed in blackface? Virgil Thomson and Duke Ellington implied as much at the time of its premiere. If the mixed-cast *Show Boat*, written by Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern from Edna Ferber's novel, can be accused of

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perpetuating stereotypes, *Porgy* cannot escape similar charges.

To defend *Porgy*, we might look at it as a many-sided transaction, borrowing elements from European opera, Broadway musical comedy, and several African-American musical genres, with gains and losses all around. *Porgy* remains the only opera to have produced hit tunes in the twentieth century the way Verdi's operas produced organ-grinders' songs in the nineteenth. "Summertime," "I Got Plenty o' Nuthin'," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "I Loves You, Porgy," "It Ain't Necessarily So," "My Man's Gone Now," "A Woman Is a Sometime Thing"—few Broadway shows, let alone operas, can match that string of hits. These tunes, moreover, still flourish equally in the theater, the concert hall, and the realm of jazz, where the Miles Davis–Gil Evans suite is a classic. And yet *Porgy* is more than the sum of its tunes. For the first time Gershwin used songs to create characters: his Broadway songs were based on the styles of their performers, not on the characters they were playing. These characters, however, are at once powerful archetypes and painful stereotypes.

The English critic Wilfrid Mellers has argued that *Porgy* is more than a black opera—it is a parable of American society in general and Gershwin's creative problems in particular. Mellers, himself indulging in psychobiography, linked *Porgy* the physical cripple with Gershwin the "emotional cripple." But, taking Mellers's idea further, we can also see the main characters of *Porgy* as splintered aspects of Gershwin's music: *Porgy* stands for the sexless gentility of the concert hall, *Crown* for the unbridled sexual energy of jazz, *Sportin' Life* for the opiate of Tin Pan Alley, and *Bess* for the eternally fickle audience. *Porgy*'s murder of *Crown*, a symbolic castration that gives *Porgy* his manhood through a kind of genital transplant, can be seen as a desperate and ultimately failed attempt to imbue classical music with sexual power. Perhaps Gershwin connected creatively with such an allegorical reading, but on stage we see real black people playing black characters in a realistic setting. Why should their roles be used to symbolize the southern-white guilt of Du Bose Heyward and the Broadway anxieties of the Gershwin brothers? Yet it can also be said that *Porgy and Bess* owes its

success to the artistry of its black performers, who, as Gershwin may have anticipated when he heard Virgil Thomson's all-black *Four Saints in Three Acts*, gave the music and even the words an authenticity its authors could never provide.

Porgy and Bess is by no means the only opera to tell an emotionally compelling story within a spurious exotic setting. Is *Carmen* authentically Spanish? Is *Butterfly* Japanese? Anyone who has seen the play *M. Butterfly* has been disabused of that notion. Today it is all too easy to see *Porgy* as just another imperialist opera in which the Other acts out European fantasies. Inevitably it will be argued that the semblance of emotional truth in *Porgy* was itself a powerful deception that stood in the way of a collaboration between, say, Duke Ellington and Langston Hughes. Our current obsession with multiculturalism, however, needs to be complemented by an awareness of intracultural exchange. Like it or not, in American culture everything is crossover.

IF George Gershwin placed himself at a busy intersection of American music, Charles Ives withdrew from American musical life altogether. In 1902 Ives's cantata *The Celestial Country* was given its premiere, and it received mixed reviews. Soon after, Ives announced that he was quitting music. Like Thoreau's departure from Concord village to Walden Pond, like Henry James's abandonment of America for Europe, and like *Bartleby the Scrivener*'s eternal negation, Ives's rejection of a musical career in twentieth-century America carries momentous cultural resonances. As are many experiences of religious or romantic negation, it was a conversion experience. Ives's true compositional career, which would produce the two great piano sonatas, the pair of orchestral sets, and the colossal Fourth Symphony, began after he "gave up" composition and entered the life-insurance business, where he would make his fortune.

How do we evaluate this exemplary moment? Stuart Feder, a practicing psychoanalyst who has written on music for many years, brings familiar Freudian machinery to bear on Ives's case. Unlike Joan Peyser, however, he uses psychoanalytic techniques with subtlety and skill. In *Charles Ives: "My Father's Song,"* Feder sounds like a good shrink. He lis-

tens well to words and music. He is sensitive and sympathetic. He *cares* about Charles Ives. Because Feder's psychoanalytic biography follows Frank Rossiter's superb social history, *Charles Ives and His America*, and excellent studies of Ives's intellectual milieu by Rosalie Sandra Perry and J. Peter Burkholder, the one-sidedness of Feder's approach rounds out our view of Ives rather than reducing it to the merely psychological. Nevertheless, I think that Feder fails to take the full measure of Ives's great rejection of America's classical-music culture.

From the outside it is easy to describe Ives's decision to give up a career in music as an immature and excessive reaction to reviews that were not really so bad. Any artist has to learn to live with unfriendly criticism. The consequences of Ives's apparent pique were large and unfortunate, not just for Ives but for the further development of American music: most of his work remained unedited, unpublished, and unperformed for decades. Ives could not benefit from the experience of hearing his music in performance (a crucial lesson for most composers), and while it remained unpublished, his music could not influence the development of other composers. Yet Ives was twenty-eight when he made his decision. He had been composing for many years, and had been well trained not just by his father but also by his Yale professor Horatio Parker, one of the leading American composers of the day. Despite its appearance, Ives's decision was neither rash nor necessarily irrational.

Frank Rossiter considered Ives's choice at great length, dwelling on Ives's aesthetic philosophy and the conditions of the time. He concluded that Ives's decision to leave music was motivated by a deep-seated conventionality: because of his respectable mercantile background (his family owned a hardware business and a bank in Danbury), and also because of the prevalent notion that art was for "sissies," Ives could not accept the role of the artist, and pursued baseball and business instead. He capitulated to the conformity of American life rather than rebelling against it. By refusing to earn a living as an artist he only affirmed the baleful notion of gentility in which art was an entertainment for the idle rich. And yet, as Aaron Copland responded after hearing Rossiter speak, What about

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the music? Ives may have made a social capitulation in refusing to have his family "starve on his dissonances," but the music he wrote afterward did not surrender to convention; it was revolutionary.

Feder thinks that Ives made a compromise "intrapsychically, unconsciously," and that the issue was not gentility or even money. Ives's apparent musical isolation was a means of psychological reunion with his dead father. The music he wrote was a "posthumous intrapsychic collaboration." Because George Ives was a musician, his son's identification with him took a peculiar form, with the ear taking the place of the penis: "The male child's dawning perception of the organ he shares with the father facilitates the development of masculine identification." The ear became "the focus of stimulation, the orifice penetrated, the portal of entry"—not only an erotic organ but clearly the focus of homoerotic feelings toward the father which would need to be repressed. Yet, Feder notes, as Ives's work became increasingly experimental, "George, the experimenter, not only remains alive through Ives's identification and idealization. He becomes exaggerated and, in some respects, invented." Because his father's economic standing had been a source of social embarrassment in Danbury, where the Ives family had long been prominent, Ives invoked his father's memory creatively out of his guilt-ridden need to surpass his father—a musical equivalent of the castration wishes of the Oedipus complex.

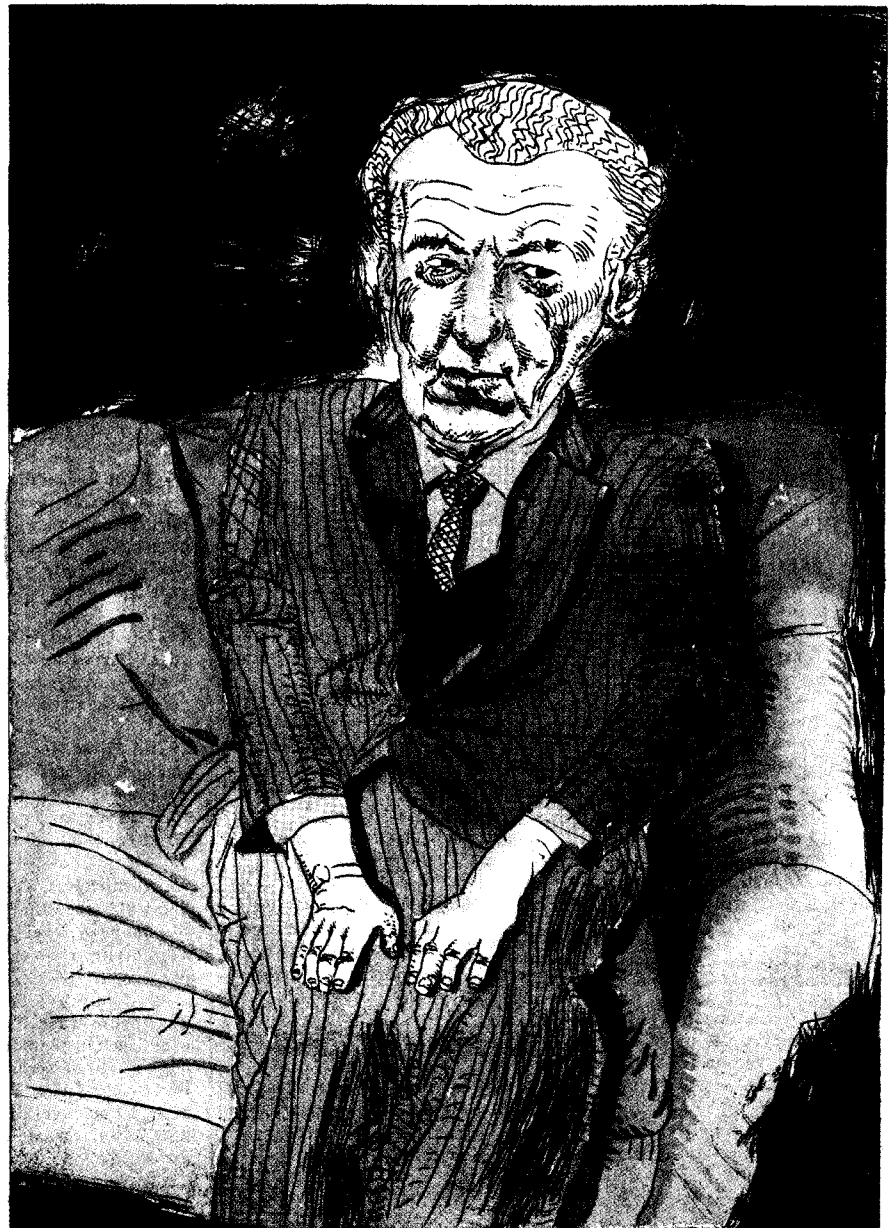
In the music, which Feder decodes psychoanalytically, Ives's father appears in several ways, invoked either directly, as in *The Pond*, where George Ives's horn is heard across the waters, or by historical setting. George Ives served in the Union Army; much of Ives's music commemorates the Civil War, with tunes such as "Marching Through Georgia" and "Dixie." In his compositions Charles Ives used hymns, popular songs, and marches to depict scenes of New England life. The tunes Ives selected place these scenes in the 1870s, the time of his boyhood, or even earlier—the 1840s and 1850s, when his father was a boy: though Ives's music was innovative in its technique, its subject matter was almost entirely related to the past. Ives is often praised for his skill with the musical vernacular, but he had little use for the popular music of his own day. The most

nearly contemporary popular song Ives quotes is "Hello Ma Baby," of 1899, which incongruously appears in the 1906 Ives composition *Central Park in the Dark*—a depiction, Ives wrote, of a scene thirty years earlier.

As a Freudian narrative, Feder's account of "intrapsychic" composition is plausible, but it turns Ives's music too easily into a kinky family affair. Let me briefly offer an alternative interpretation. Ives's refusal to pursue music was an entirely realistic decision: there was no career in music at the time, certainly not for someone writing the music Ives wanted to write. Ives placed his music in the past not to commune with the ghost of his father but as a way of memorializing an

America that had been destroyed by the robber barons and millionaire industrialists, who now controlled not only the economy but culture as well. As Lawrence Levine argues in his book *HighBrow/LowBrow*, the Gilded Age transformed American culture. Elite and popular forms of culture, which had earlier mixed and interacted, were now segregated, with high culture moving into the cultural palaces built by the new millionaires, whose wives dominated the boards of trustees. Art was now reserved for rich women or idle male "aesthetes," a situation Ives protested in language that sounds misogynistic and homophobic to our ears even if his targets were cultural and not sexual. High culture was sacralized, removed from the mainstream of American beliefs and history,

BENJAMIN BRITTEN



and concert music in particular became fixated, as it still is, on the reproduction of European classics.

George Ives was a typical musician of the Jacksonian culture that preceded the Gilded Age. Putting together Fourth of July pageants or Decoration Day services, he was at once an entertainer and an experimenter. His music mirrored the religious faith and historical experiences of his community. Horatio Parker's music, which Charles Ives emulated in *The Celestial Country*, displayed all the flaws of sacralization with none of the benefits: it was conventional and dull. To Ives, moreover, its air of conformity may have epitomized his own complicity in the conformist culture of Yale in the 1890s. At Yale the elite of America's new industrial society was formed into a socially cohesive bloc through the extracurricular emphasis on sports, fraternities, and secret societies. Ives, as if to disavow his relatively humble origins, became a model Yale of the day (much as Paul Monette reports doing in the 1960s—Yale had not changed that much). Yet soon after "quitting" music Ives began to affect the manners of an eccentric Connecticut Yankee, and dropped his Yale friends and manners. For the next twenty years, until Ives succumbed to debilitating physical ailments, his music and even his career in the insurance business were a conscious protest against what he saw as the dominant values of American life: materialism, snobbery, and greed. Ives was not a neurotic but a progressive in the Wilsonian mode.

Feder, like Rossiter, is skeptical of the identification Ives made with Emerson and Thoreau in the *Concord Sonata* and even more in the erratic, often demagogic prose of the *Essays Before a Sonata*, which were written several years after the music. The essays certainly hint at self-aggrandizement. But I think we should recognize Ives's conscious motives before we hunt for unconscious ones. Feder fails to explain the originality of Ives's unprecedented musical language. He writes about these bizarre pieces as if their only oddity were their "intrapsychic" content. But any listener hears that this music is odd through and through, programmatically refusing to be normal. Even a conventional-sounding piece like the *Alcott* movement of the *Concord Sonata* is not normal music; it is a picture of the normal from the point of view of the abnormal.

Ives criticism might learn much from Harold Bloom's writings on Emerson, whom Bloom sees as the author of the American Gnosis—a belief in the unlimited power of man to transform reality. Ives carried out an Emersonian program in music: music is at once sound and representation through sound. Where such twentieth-century composers as Varèse and Cage tried to push music more in the direction of pure sound, Ives, who asked famously and enigmatically, "What has sound got to do with music?" wrote a music of total representation, music that created a world. The world Ives depicted powerfully is an alternative to contemporary America—a world of idealism, faith, and innocence, an American Eden. This naive view often betrays Ives's sentimentality and political simplemindedness (he can begin to sound like Ross Perot). Yet if Ives found in Emerson a precedent for his innovations, the unnostalgic, protesting aspects of his retreat from contemporary America sprang from the model of Thoreau, who kept his conscience by withdrawing from society. In the fourth movement of the *Concord Sonata*, Ives depicted Thoreau playing his flute by Walden Pond and listening to the distant sounds of the railroad: it is also a depiction of Ives's chosen relation to American society.

THE reputations of Gershwin and Ives may fluctuate, but Benjamin Britten's stock has risen steadily. Since the Second World War no other composer has produced so many operas that have entered the international repertory. *Peter Grimes*, *Albert Herring*, *Billy Budd*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *Death in Venice* are performed all over the world, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Gloriana*, and *Curlew River* are rapidly approaching repertory status. And yet opera was just one part of Britten's output (this is where his fans start using the word "Mozartian"). He was also a composer of songs and choral, orchestral, and chamber music, and he wrote two of the most popular compositions of the century: *A Ceremony of Carols* and *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Although Britten quickly rose to the top of English musical life, in America his music won recognition only gradually, perhaps because of a certain English reserve that makes the music feel unemotional and distant at first.

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may be typical of American listeners. On first hearing I often find his music faceless, lacking in character, or contrived and archly mannered. Then I start noticing how clever it is in construction and, particularly, orchestration. Next I realize that what I took for cleverness is in fact a prodigious and magisterial command of musical technique. Finally I come to feel the emotional impact of the music, which can be very heavy. When I recently listened again to *Death in Venice*, Britten's last opera, I found myself overwhelmed by its emotional buildup, an unexpected reaction to music that at first seemed cold, thin, and static. How to account for its strange power? Apparently Benjamin Britten was as enigmatic in his personal life as he is in his music. I take it as a strength of Humphrey Carpenter's new biography that even at its end, after hundreds of pages of scrupulously researched and critically documented anecdotes, Britten's character remains mysterious.

Some readers may find that Carpenter tells them much more than they wanted to know about Britten. I found the book remarkably readable until the end, when the understandable carping of Britten's collaborators against his high-handed treatment becomes tedious. We follow Britten through his comfortable Suffolk boyhood, his early display of musical genius and studies with Frank Bridge, his encounters with Auden, his escape, with Pears, to America, and his wartime return to England. Then came a nearly unbroken series of musical triumphs and the establishment of the English Opera Group and the Aldeburgh Festival, which Britten controlled with a fierce, often capricious hand. And like a Wagnerian leitmotif there are the boys, aged nine to fourteen, whose only complaint about Britten was that he dropped them without explanation (perhaps they had started to shave).

Unlike Joan Peyser, Carpenter carefully documents all his sources. He tests every questionable anecdote by checking the facts and also by running the story past several people. Was Britten's father homosexual? Did his schoolmaster abuse him? Did Britten have a sadistic streak? The rumors are out there, but Carpenter lets the reader decide. His frequent device of checking a rumor with three or four of Britten's friends conveys its own information. Britten had some friends who could never question his motives, others

who knew him all too well but could forgive him (we all need friends like that), and others he had offended past the point of forgiveness. His best friend of all, Peter Pears, emerges as the book's greatest puzzle—so blithely opaque that he seems to be either an incurable Pollyanna or the world's greatest poker player.

In some ways the Britten-Pears marriage was conventionally unconventional, and Britten's dalliances were a same-sex version of the old "I love my wife, but . . ." story. Carpenter's scrutiny of Britten's sex life—he tracked down and interviewed many of Britten's boys—might seem prurient if he did not so clearly understand the sensitive connection between the sex life and the operas. Britten did not lead a secret life, even though he was clearly no role model for either the Boy Scouts or gay lib. Almost all his works are based on texts by homosexual authors, such as Auden, Rimbaud, Wilfred Owen, E. M. Forster, and Michelangelo. He bent the texts of "closeted" writers such as Herman Melville, Henry James, and Thomas Mann to bring out their homosexual themes, or, more precisely, one aspect of those themes—Britten never represented on the stage anything like his constant relationship with Pears (at least not directly, although by writing the leading roles for Pears, Britten honored their relationship again and again). The operas do not celebrate love between men. Instead they return repeatedly to the theme of the problematic relation between men and boys—a relation fraught for Britten with guilt and corruption. With astonishing candor Britten made his obsessive love for boys and its attendant guilt the subject of his greatest operas, beginning with *Peter Grimes* and concluding with *Death in Venice*. In doing so Britten went way beyond Freud: he neither sublimated nor repressed his feelings, instead both acting them out and examining them in his art.

Britten's revolutionary expressive program, as uninhibited a display of forbidden desires as Wagner's celebrations of incest and adultery (but with none of Wagner's romantic claptrap), is all the more remarkable because it was pursued in the most public of musical forms—opera—and at a time when the state still punished with great severity the feelings Britten wished to portray. The most interesting side of the Britten story is the way

he balanced the personal and the public. Surprisingly, Britten saw himself as the opposite of the Romantic composer writing out of inner need. In a *New York Times* interview he accused nineteenth-century composers of puffing up their egos, and he affirmed the composer's social role: "It is better to be a bad composer writing for society than to be a bad composer writing against it. At least your work can be of *some* use." Yet Britten's operas seem to be written precisely against society. Was he deluding himself, or had he given himself the out of not being a "bad" composer?

Peter Grimes, Britten's first operatic success, was the result of very conscious thematic criticism and compromise by Britten and Pears. It was based on a poem, "The Borough," by George Crabbe, set in a Suffolk village in the early nineteenth century. In the poem Grimes is a brutal psychopath. Britten and Pears, however, saw him as an outsider rejected by the village. They projected onto him those qualities that made them outsiders in wartime Britain: homosexuality and, oddly enough, given Grimes's violent nature, pacifism. They invented a brutal father for Grimes, much as Britten may have invented one for himself, as an explanation for his proclivities. The resulting scenario was daring and unperformable. In the final libretto, by Montagu Slater, Grimes is a conundrum. He is factually innocent of the death of two boys, but feels guilty enough to accept his best friends' advice to commit suicide. He is at times brutal, at others poetic and visionary. He betrays no homosexual thoughts, and announces that he will marry the village schoolmistress, Ellen Orford; yet his motives for marriage are venal, and he never shows a moment's tenderness toward Ellen.

The final version of the libretto made *Peter Grimes* a success. As Virgil Thomson tartly noted, it had all the surefire ingredients of a nineteenth-century grand opera: "a trial scene, a boat, a church (with organ music), a pub (with drinking song for the full ensemble), a storm, a nightclub seen through a window (with boogie-woogie music off stage and shadow play), a scene of flagellation, a mad scene, and a death." Drawing also on the examples of *Wozzeck*, with its mad protagonist and powerful orchestral interludes, and *Porgy and Bess*, another sea-

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What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city were rarely, if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Moslem Arabs declared their willingness to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Moslems and Jews) with its two mosques. It is the place from which Mohammed is believed to have ascended to heaven. Mohammed never set foot in Jerusalem. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Moslem history did this mosque compare in significance to the Moslem holy cities of Mecca and Medina—cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Moslem claim. It's on the basis of this religious tradition that the Moslems designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli Government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Moslem sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Moslem control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Moslem tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and if the Moslem Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Moslem claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Moslem Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city". And it would be an insult to all Moslems and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews".

Jerusalem: never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem—in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus—has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Moslem Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country since biblical times. It was the site of one Moslem holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Moslem Arabs until most recent history.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous. And the Moslem Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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side melodrama filled with colorful vignettes, Britten gave English opera the masterpiece it had waited for since Purcell. Unfortunately, the story made no sense, but in the annals of opera there are many precedents for that failing. Throughout the 1950s critics raised doubts about the story. Ironically, the opera's reputation was finally secured in a 1967 production starring Jon Vickers and conducted by Colin Davis. Vickers's powerful heldentenor voice contrasted sharply with the almost disembodied and coreless tenor of Peter Pears, the original Grimes. Vickers's Grimes was huge, monstrous, and somehow pitiable without special pleading. In short, he was the straight Grimes.

In its inconsistencies *Peter Grimes* can be seen as a product of overdetermined ambition: Britten and Pears wanted to be both honest and successful, but success could come only at the price of honesty. This criticism misses the truly provocative aspect of the opera, however. Although the story of Grimes is incoherent when viewed from the angle of the oedipal master narrative, the demand for rational consistency of plot and character is itself a form of repression. Grimes the character and *Grimes* the opera refuse to make sense because they exemplify the conditions of the closet, whether in nineteenth-century Suffolk or in twentieth-century London. All the conventional elements Thomson cited, which display Britten's prodigious compositional virtuosity, serve to dramatize their own irrelevance to Grimes's hidden being. The opera is radically anti-psychological.

Carpenter's biography is exemplary in the objectivity of its reporting and in its subtle literary readings of the works. (His musical analyses, in charmingly middle-brow British style, rely too much on the symbolism of musical keys.) He allows us to see that although in one way Britten's operas inhabit a very particular sexual world, in other ways they deal with the classic subjects of opera: desire, power, innocence, and guilt. Britten's world is uncomfortably un-universal. Far removed from the diva worship of the opera queen, so wittily described in Wayne Koestenbaum's *The Queen's Throat*, Britten's operas take place in a world without women (unless they are inept mothers or threatening whores), viewed through a gay sensibility that shuns the consolations of

camp. Some listeners may squirm, but Britten's insistence on placing his own sexual perspective onstage without apology lends his operas their unique authenticity and fuels their musical invention. Given the subject of the music, Carpenter's heavy helpings of sexual anecdotes seem necessary for an understanding of Britten's unprecedented achievement. Carpenter shows how Britten wrote and rewrote his own psychobiography until, in *Death in Venice*, the premises of psychoanalysis were finally put to rest as sexual guilt gave way to the pursuit of musical beauty.

Freud has been dead a long time. We live in a post-oedipal age. Prozac is replacing the talking cure of analysis. Serial monogamy, the two-career household, alternative lifestyles, and child care from birth may not make us happier, but they have destroyed the rigid categories of Freud's family romance. It is hard today to accept the applicability of Freud's ideas to all cultures and all times. It seems odd, for instance, to apply to Charles Ives notions of repressed homoerotic and incestuous feelings, which he would have found incomprehensible, while ignoring the ethical and political ideas he took so seriously. And it seems odder still—if not philistine—to apply the pabulum Freud of today's self-help

psychology to a figure as complex as Gershwin. We may not love Rose Gershwin, but George apparently did. The alleged dysfunctionality of Gershwin's family cannot explain why he wrote the kind of music he did or why so much of that music continues to live.

The psychobiography of composers perpetuates a notion that seems even more dated than Freudianism: the romance of artists' lives. They still appear as prisoners of their sensitive souls, eternal innocents or spoiled children. This is not Freud, it's Puccini—another trip to the theme park of bohemia. There is an understandable confusion here between the emotional appeal of the music and the lives of the artists. Gershwin, Ives, and Britten were hard-working professionals who spent most of their lives putting their ideas on paper and trying to advance their careers. They differ from most other professionals only in that their work remains of interest to many people years after their deaths.

The mystery is not in the lives but in the art and the ways in which it continues to move us or even anger us. As psychoanalysis fades into the past and psychobiology slowly reduces all our feelings to their molecular components, music can still speak to our desires, our fears, our deepest uncertainties, and our fondest pleasures. ♣

BRIEF REVIEWS



General James Longstreet

by Jeffry D. Wert.
Simon & Schuster, 384 pages,
\$27.00.

The man whom Robert E. Lee once addressed as "my old war-horse" presents a biographer with a problem. Longstreet lost two houses to fire, and with them all the private papers and letters that might have enabled Mr. Wert to get beyond his subject's professional life. The military

facts are there, down to the name of the railroad on which Longstreet rode from one unimportant spot to the next. (Mr. Wert is conscientious.) Like so many of the West Pointers who later commanded Federals or Confederates, Longstreet learned his trade in the Mexican War, where he proved himself a notably good officer and had the opportunity to observe the effectiveness of Winfield Scott's tactics. General Scott deplored frontal assaults and was adroit with flanking movements, points that Longstreet never

forgot. Lee's determination to make a frontal assault at Gettysburg provoked opposition from Longstreet and led to later accusations that Longstreet was responsible for the Confederate defeat there. There is little reason to credit that charge, but Mr. Wert has turned up some other facts that suggest that Longstreet, though a fine battle commander, was less than scrupulous off the field. He received pay as a Confederate officer before resigning his U.S. commission, engaged in what amounted to a conspiracy while serving under Braxton Bragg in Tennessee, and maneuvered shamelessly after the war for preferment from the victorious Federals. That last move can be considered no worse than practical common sense, but men who were not old friends of Ulysses Grant were understandably annoyed. Military records are necessarily cold, humorless, and tailored to circumstance, and because these are all Mr. Wert had to work with, readers looking for a human character may find Longstreet no more than an efficient fighting machine. Civil War enthusiasts will certainly find the book of interest.

**Charles M. Russell,
Word Painter**

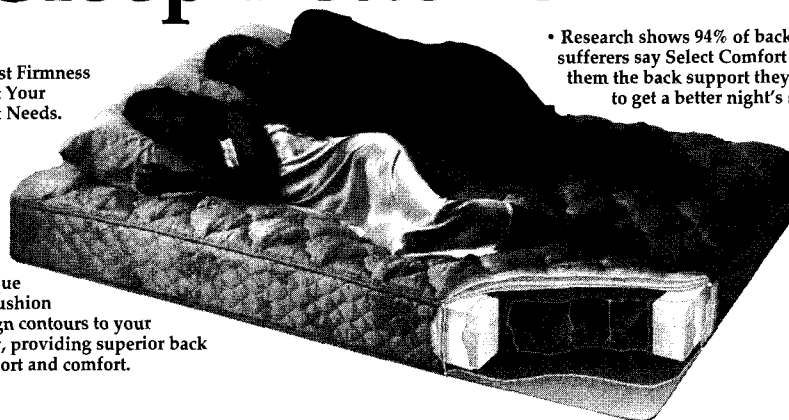
*edited by Brian W. Dippie.
Amon Carter Museum,
distributed by Abrams,
444 pages, \$95.00.*

In 1864 a fourth child was born to Charles Silas and Mary Elizabeth Russell, of St. Louis, Missouri. The Russells were prosperous—he was the financial manager of a growing mining and manufacturing company—and expected their son to, in the old phrase, make something of himself, presumably through education. Young Charlie proved impervious to schooling, or indeed to anything but the lure of the western frontier. In 1880 his parents gave up and allowed the boy to spend the summer on a sheep ranch in Montana. He never really came back. What he did do, when not night-herding horses and hanging about with cowboys in the local saloon, was draw, paint, and eventually model the action around him, casually giving away his work to anyone who wanted it. People did want it, it became widely known, and by the turn of the century Russell was a successful artist with a national reputation as the

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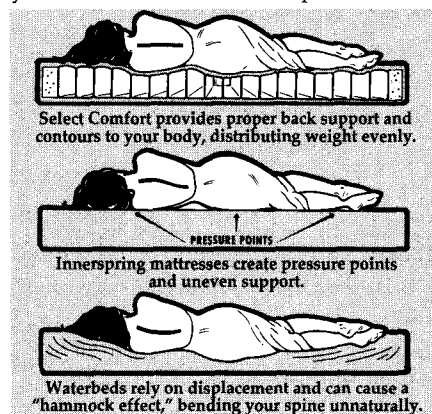
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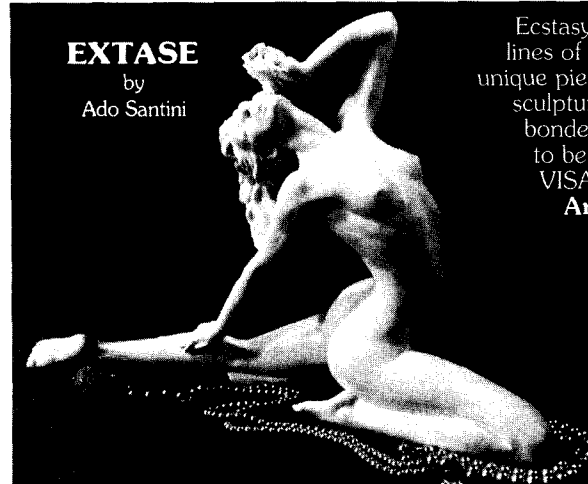
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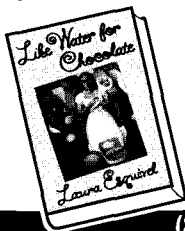
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great recorder, along with Frederic Remington, of a frontier already become history. Russell never learned to spell, and punctuation remained a mystery to him, but he wrote letters that, reproduced in this handsome tome, are a delight to the eye, because he filled his pages with the sketches that came easily to him instead of with the writing that he professed to find toilsome. His language was as idiosyncratic as his spelling. New York City became "a camp of four millions an I guess I know about eight it makes me feel small. . . ." On that same trip, he reported to "Friend Bill," "you will notice in the picture below I've spent money on harness but I'm going to dress well if it brakes me." The picture below is a self-caricature combining polished gentlemen's fashion of 1903 with western boots, a sagging red sash, and a derby too small for Russell's solid head. Russell could write eloquently when he wanted to, particularly about the lost world of cattle drives and Indians and open country, and he could be tersely funny. His hand is not always readily decipherable, but the text is usually worth the effort and the illustrations are always a lavish, effortless pleasure. The editorial notes are thorough and helpful.

Robert Davidson: Eagle of the Dawn

edited by Ian M. Thom.

University of Washington,
192 pages, \$50.00.

Robert Davidson, of British Columbia, is a Haida artist who creates striking works in the ancestral native style and has contributed major support to the revival of Haida traditions. This well-illustrated tribute to his achievements demonstrates the beauty of his sculpture, jewelry, and prints, but offers little information on the Haida myths and legends from which his motifs derive.

Twilight Country

by Knut Faldbakken,

translated by Joan Tate.

Dufour, 216 pages, \$29.00.

Although the author is Norwegian, his quietly alarming novel is set in a generalized projection of a society disintegrating from the effects of industrial pollution and economic inadequacy. Air is unbreathable, water is undrinkable, all goods are in short supply, and all services



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are erratic. Nothing flourishes except bureaucracy, as a baffled government grinds out cradle-to-grave regulations that complicate a citizen's life without improving it in the least. Mr. Faldbakken's hero escapes from the mess with his wife and small son by fleeing to the vast dump that borders the city. There they find a few other refugees with whom, through ingenuity and a little violence, they construct the beginnings of a community. In one way the novel is a gruesome forecast of a world ending with a whimper under a pile of its own garbage. In another it celebrates the human capacity to survive on an unprecedented frontier. The reader is free to choose.

The Columbia Encyclopedia

edited by Barbara A. Chernow
and George A. Vallasi.
Columbia University, distributed
by Houghton Mifflin,
3,072 pages, \$125.00.

The fifth edition of this solid one-volume reference book includes AIDS (previously there was merely "aids," a rather protean feudal tax) and brings the history of Somalia from 1974 up to the current UN relief effort. It retains a few entrenched annoyances, too. From Knossos one must still see the generally discarded Latinization, "Cnossus." Part of the charm of any encyclopedia is the enticement to waste time and stumble on unexpected and possibly unintentional information. Kipling's *Jungle Book* tiger was named for an antique Mogul ruler, but who would know that except by coming upon the real Sher Khan, dates and all, while looking up something else entirely?

The Fus Fixico Letters

by Alexander Posey,
edited by Daniel F. Littlefield Jr.
and Carol A. Petty Hunter.
University of Nebraska,
304 pages, \$37.50.

Posey, the son of a Creek mother and a white father, was officially a Creek and a newspaper editor in Oklahoma during the years of argument over the transition from Indian Territory to statehood. In addition to editing, Posey wrote occasional columns as Fus Fixico, a grassroots reporter of Creek opinion. Dialect humor is out of fashion, but when handled by a

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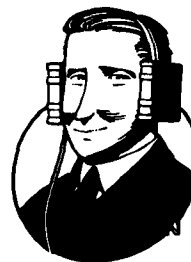
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man who truly knew the lingo, it has its points. "Well," Fixico begins,

so Hotgun he say he was for double statehood, 'cause they was too much long-tailed cyclones out in Oklahoma and people was had to live right close to a hole in the ground like prairie dogs to keep out a they way. . . . Then Hotgun he say they was no one want to be spliced onto Oklahoma but some thumb papers that was printed out in the country and didn't had no circulation except when they was being printed.

The ins and outs of the statehood row may be more than a modern reader cares to follow, but a random dip anywhere in the collection will turn up an item like the attempt to charge the Town and Country Club with violation of a Prohibition law. Getting nowhere with Lieutenant Colonel Adjutant General J. Wentdressed Withem, the court called in the club's black cook and asked her what the members drank.

And the old Auntie she say, "Well, so sometimes coffee and sometimes tea and den again sometimes pure water. But how you 'spec' I gwinter to know when de Loosetenant Colonel Stunt General Mistah Wentdressed Withem don't trust nobody with his gin but hissef?"

Wentdressed Withem's real name was J. Fentress Wisdom, and the perversion is, by Fixico's standards, mild. Teddy Roosevelt was President Rooster Feather and Secretary of the Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock became It's Cocked, possibly in sly tribute to his notorious inability to make a decision. Posey was an intelligent journalist (he correctly predicted the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War) and his humor retains mirth and bite despite time and changes of literary fashion. The editors have done admirably in providing identification and factual background for Fixico's irreverent communications.

**Seized: Temporal
Lobe Epilepsy as a
Medical, Historical, and
Artistic Phenomenon**

by Eve LaPlante. HarperCollins,
254 pages, \$20.00.

This book grew out of an article that first appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams

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PUZZLER CONTEST

Send your solved Puzzler "Theme and Variations" (found on page 127) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, January Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by January 11. The winners' names will be published in the March issue. In addition, each of the winners will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Tough Cryptics*, a bimonthly cryptics publication.

Rules: Only one entry per person allowed. No purchase necessary. No entries can be returned. All decisions are final. *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years or older, except employees of *The Atlantic* and their immediate families. Winners will be notified by mail. Contest void where prohibited and subject to all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

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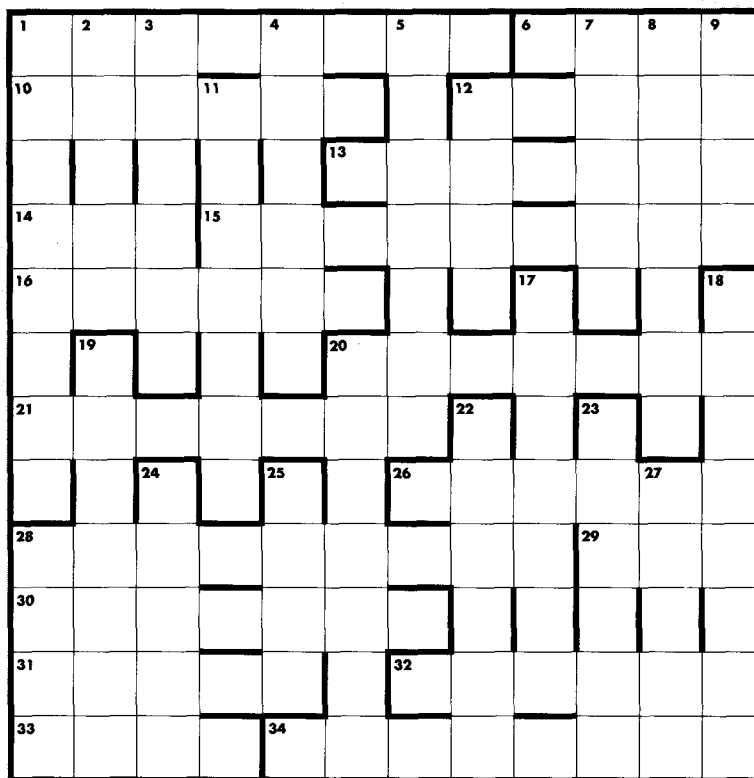
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Theme and Variations

Three related Theme Words (A, B, and C), with three variations apiece, make up this puzzle's 12 unclued entries. For example, if a Theme Word were PIRATE, its variations might be HOOK, SILVER, and BLOOD (examples) or IRATE, RATE, and ATE (progressive beheadings). Clue answers include two proper nouns; variations include four proper nouns.

See page 126 for Puzzler contest details.
The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 112.



Across

1. Engaged in conversation about blue snail (8)
6. Variation on C
10. The face of the Indian destroyer (6) (two words)
12. Shop for food with a feminine tag (5)
13. Sympathize with general in run-off retreats (7) (two words)
14. Theme Word B
15. Variation on B
16. Drive skillfully, but not very smartly (6)
20. Variation on A
21. Variation on B
26. Stop being captivated by expected charisma (6)
28. Wants Barry's ultimate salary (9)
29. Variation on A

30. British politician breaking Gaelic country's rules? (7)
31. Large illustration, except for the front (5)
32. A book's left margin and right (6)
33. Variation on C
34. Start off lofty verses on ancient city's ruins (8)

Down

1. Colonist with a piece of sturdy brown pottery? (8)
2. Subsist on red meat of a sort (5)
3. Variation on B
4. Some freedom for what might easily be played on stage by Dad? (6)
5. Hold onto message about Navy football player's accessory (7)
7. Tiny river in Africa comes up with fluorine in it (5)
8. Wild river in Mexico getting as far as America (7)
9. Variation on C
11. Fixer of a deep-dish fruit pie (7)
12. "Refreshingly moist," a librarian said (4)
17. Stopped in convertible, he cedes (7)
18. Swindlers run from half of officers (8)
19. Among sandwiches Gibson brought up pickle (7)
20. Swallow some baloney with a bit of vodka in social get-together (7)
22. Hobbyist with permit for a little horn (6)
23. "Blue Danube"'s beginning taken in by Mr. Jones (6)
24. Theme Word A
25. Erin dances about (4) (two words)
27. Variation on A
28. Theme Word C

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD HISTORIES

by Craig M. Carver

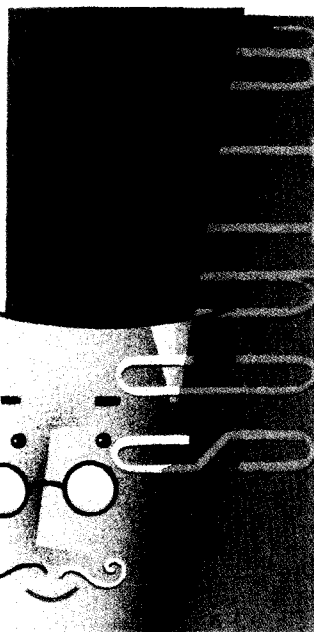
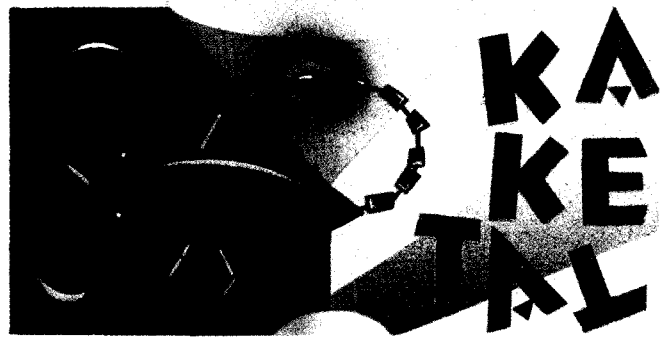
cocktail

With the installation of a Democratic Administration last January, young Republicans found themselves scrambling for new jobs and struggling for credibility. "We're not just a bunch of stiffies in Brooks Brothers suits . . . concerned about where the next *cocktail* party is," one twenty-seven-year-old who works for the National Republican Congressional Committee told *The New York Times*. "There are a bunch of us who are seriously concerned about the future of our country." *Cocktail* (a chilled drink containing a mixture of hard liquor and flavorings) may hold the record

for number of purported histories. Some of the languages to which histories have been ascribed are Aztec (*cocktail* deriving from *Xochitl*, a Toltec nobleman's daughter who delighted the King by serving him an alcoholic concoction), West African (*kaktal*, "scorpion," because a *cocktail* has a sting to it), and French (*coquetier*, "eggcup," in which a New Orleans apothecary supposedly served a mixed drink). But most authorities agree that *cocktail* probably has an English history. One possible source is *cock-ale*, a mercifully obsolete drink made by boiling a pulverized red rooster in sack and adding the broth and other ingredients to ale. The

most plausible explanation is that *cocktail* meaning "a mixed drink" is a figurative derivation from *cocktail* meaning "a non-thoroughbred [that is, mixed] horse." Hunting and stagecoach horses during the eighteenth

and early nineteenth centuries were usually of mixed parentage and had shortened, or cocked, tails ("A hundred good horses, both *cocktail* and blood"—Rowland Warburton, *Hunting Songs and miscellaneous verses*, 1859).



scurrilous

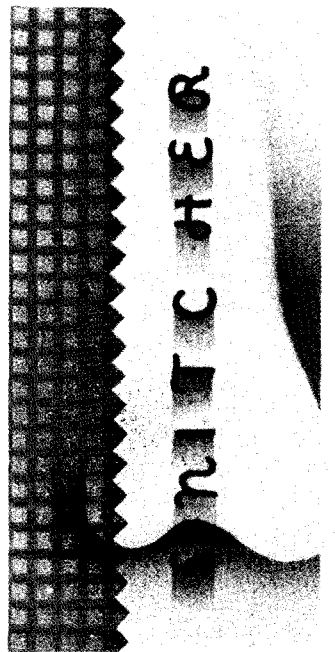
Shortly after President Bill Clinton formally dismissed William Sessions as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, last July, Sessions held a news conference at which he railed at "the *scurrilous* attacks on me and my wife of 42 years" which had resulted in his removal. The ultimate origin of *scurrilous* (charac-

terized by vulgar or coarsely abusive language) may be in the Greek *skairo-*, meaning "to skip or dance," which in Latin became *scurra* (literally "one who jaunts about"), meaning "an elegant, urbane gentleman or dandy." (Alternatively, some authorities assert that the Latin is an Etruscan borrowing.) Because a *scurra* typically attached himself to a wealthy person and used flattery and sophisticated humor to garner favor, *scurra* came to refer more narrowly to "one who jokes, a jester or buffoon." (According to Cicero, Zeno sarcastically called Socrates an Attic buffoon: "*Zeno Socratem scurram Atticum fuisse dicebat.*") Because a jester or buffoon traditionally had license to use crude and mocking speech, *scurra* gave rise to *scurrilis* (jeering). By the sixteenth century English had borrowed either *scurrilis* or the derivative French *scurrile*, and *scurrilous* (or *scurril*) was usually used to refer to the coarse or indecent language of a buffoon ("What shall we thinke of *skurulous*, deceptfull, byting, slanderous . . . wordes?"—George Gascoigne, *Needles Eye*, 1576).

snitch

Last July city officials in Des Moines invited residents to use a special hot line to report violations of the water rules in effect in the aftermath of the floods. "It sounds like something out of Big Brother, inform on your neighbor," said one resident. "I debate that, whether people should be encouraged to *snitch*." *Snitch* (to inform on someone) was originally seventeenth-century cant for "a fillip on the nose"—a meaning that quickly became obsolete—and also English dialect for "nose" ("Blaw thi *snitch*, an deean't sniffle like that, Nicholson"—cited in *English Dialect Dictionary*, 1889). *Snitch* fits an old proto-Germanic pattern in which the sound *sn-* is associated with words involving the nose—seen in English in *snout*, *snoot*, *snot*, *snuff*, *sniff*, *snivel*, *sniffle*, *snifter*, *snoop*, *snub*, and *snicker*. Some English dialect variations on *snitch*: *snitch-roots*, meaning "nostrils"; *snitch* meaning "scent, odour" ("All to once her'll smell a *snitch* o' sage and ingins"—Sabine Baring-Gould, *Dartmoor Idylls*, 1896); and *snitchams*,

meaning "a fit of sneezing." *Nose* in British slang came to mean "an informer" ("They are frequently made use of as *noses* by the officers"—John Badcock, *A Living Picture of London*, 1828) and "to inform on" ("Nor was he ever known to *nose* upon any of his accomplices"—William H. Ainsworth, *Rookwood*, 1834), and therefore so did *snitch*.



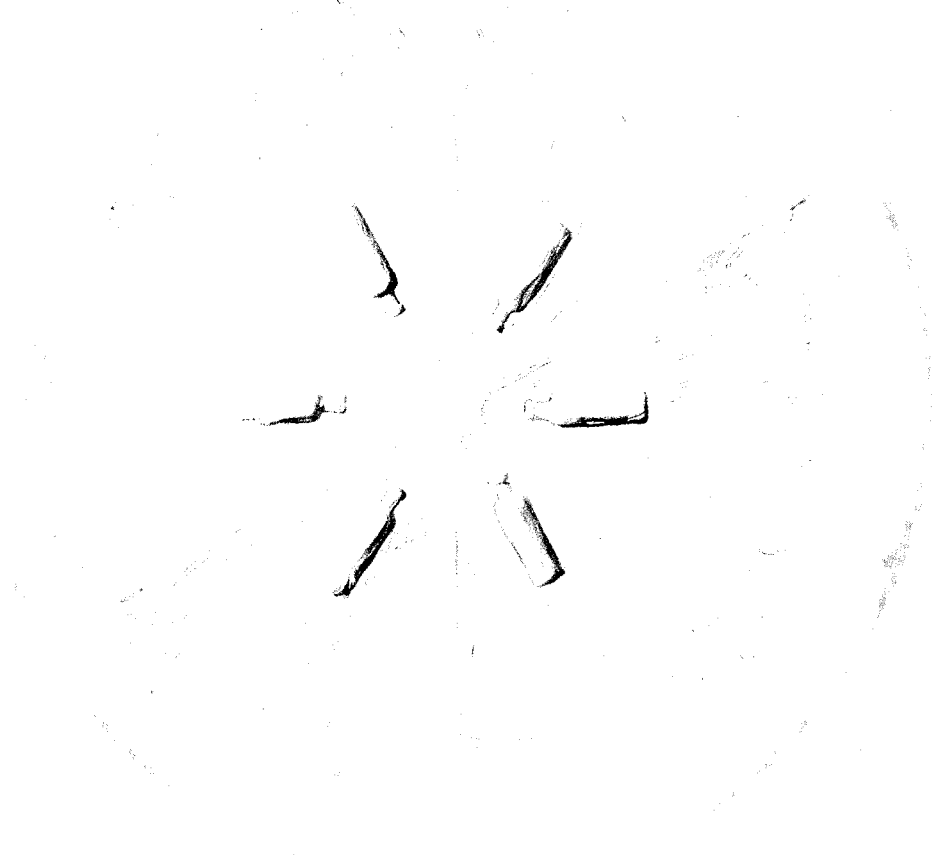


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